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dwb

No.123 February 1994

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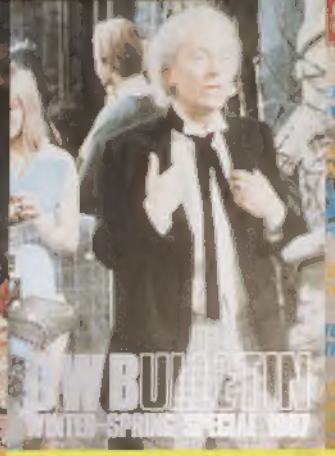
INVASION OF THE KILLER CONDOMS!



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DreamWatch Bulletin 123
PO Box 1015
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An unintented American focus to this issue, as we catch up with the Christmas back-log of Next Gen and DS9 synopses.

As to the WHO content, it includes a somewhat delayed, and, I'm sure, highly controversial article. To those who feel that running yet another JNT article is flogging a dead horse - I'd normally agree, but I feel that this article is the one with which that horse can finally be buried; and to those who'll feel outraged that DWB is taking Nathan-Turner's side - we're not. But however convinced you, or I, or anyone else are that DWB's generally critical interpretation of this period in DOCTOR WHO'S history is correct, there are those who are not. And DWB's coverage of the period cannot be complete until an alternative view has been aired. After which, that's it.

ANTHONY

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Wraparound cover: A Vorlon ship approaches Babylon 5 *(© Foundation Imaging 1993)*

THANKS TO: J Jeremy Bentham, Paula Bentham, Nigel Thomas, John S Hall, Dave Owen, Anthony McKay, Gary Russell & Marvel UK, Richard Molesworth, Craig Hinton, BBC Video, Rebecca Levene & Virgin Books.

NEXT ISSUE:

Tom at Sixty - The definitive Time Lord passes an anniversary...Elisabeth Sladen Interview ...SURVIVORS - The end of season one...*Arc of Infinity* reviewed...*PUBLISHED FEBRUARY 17*
(The above is subject to last minute alterations...)

NOTICES: A package of materialintended for this issue, comprising readers surveys returns, letters and classified ad text, was taken without permission at the January Fitzroy Tavern meeting and subsequently dumped. Would anyone who sent in any of the above between January 1-6 please send in a duplicate. We apologise for any inconvenience.

DWB Interview File: To ensure that this book is of the highest standard possible, it has been necessary to delay publication yet again while we await updates from several of the featured subjects. Apologies to everyone who has ordered in advance - we hope to publish on or around February 22...

DAY OF RECKONING LOOMS FOR *DOCTOR WHO*'s FUTURE

A HIGH-RANKING BBC Enterprises executive flew to Amblin's Los Angeles headquarters on January 11 to establish the production company's intentions regarding the proposed DOCTOR WHO takeover bid.

Since the announcement of their new 22-part science fiction series EARTH II, which enters production in the spring, Amblin have reportedly failed to make their position regarding DOCTOR WHO clear, with some sources suggesting that they do not want to take it on until 1998.

Negotiations have taken place since as early as January 1993 and the contracts could, effectively, be signed tomorrow, but several undisclosed factors appear to have made the company hesitant. One theory is that Amblin have thus far failed to attract the backing of a major US network like Paramount or CBS, possibly due to DOCTOR WHO's up to now PBS status, in contrast to the apparent speed with which the all-new EARTH II was commissioned.

Unless a deal can be secured during the ten-day visit, it has been intimated that alternative negotiations regarding DOCTOR WHO's future will be immediately entered into, with both the BBC and Enterprises allegedly thirsty for new product (Alan Yentob took a call from Amblin while recording his brief segment for THIRTY YEARS IN THE TARDIS!). The current repeat season on BBC2 has been interpreted in part as a device to keep the new wave of interest in the series generated by the thirtieth anniversary celebrations on the boil while discussions regarding its future continue.

•**AMBLIN's** rumoured plans for revamping the TARDIS console room provide a telling insight into the style of the proposed new series, if a source close to the company is to be believed. The time rotor would apparently be replaced by a pair of hologram *lips*, which one of the Doctor's new companions teaches to...*rap*!

COMMENT

HANCOCK STILL AT WAR AS DALEKS CELEBRATE THIRTY YEARS

ANY celebrations held to mark the thirtieth anniversary of the Daleks' first on-screen appearance on December 28 were noticeably subdued, as Britain continued to quake under the relentless grip of an adversary of a far more fearsome kind - their agent Roger Hancock Ltd.!

In a year in which the Daleks made a big impression on the fashionability stakes - culminating in a season of back to back Dalek stories on UK Gold and *Planet of the Daleks* on BBC1 - you would be forgiven for assuming that, just this once, Hancock would have turned a blind eye to the homage-making that swamped the ultimate kitsch symbol of homegrown terror. On the contrary, 1993 saw Hancock in overdrive as Terry Nation's agent sought to root out the perpetrators of just about *anyone* who would dare captitalise on these relics of a bygone age:

•***Exterminate!*** Mr. Motivator himself was no match for Hancock's war of words following the 'degrading' sight of a Dalek joining in the exercise slot on ITV's breakfast show...

•***Exterminate!*** Suffer the Children? Hancock disallowed the use of the Daleks in CHILDREN IN NEED's *Dimensions in Time*, unless the charity was prepared to *pay* for the privilege...

•***Exterminate!*** Those who have helped line the coffers of the Hancock organisation - the main purchasers of Dalek merchandise - were targeted, as war on fan-built Daleks was declared...

•***Exterminate!*** The proposed New Adventure - *War of the Daleks* - is currently embroiled in a dispute over royalties (Hancock is believed to be holding out for a similar deal to that wrangled from the TV novelisations; namely a 60% cut!)...

And so the list goes on... Those close to US-based Nation maintain that he is not a grasping or over-protective individual, and that it is Roger Hancock Ltd. - which looks after his UK interests - that continues to harbour a misconception of the Daleks' true worth in the fad-filled nineties. Most children today would invariably plump for dinosaurs, Terminators and Game Boys rather than a Dapol Dalek, while the only endearing quality of the 'intergalactic pepperpots' to a more discerning intellect borders on kitsch appeal.

Perhaps the Daleks *will* be brought well and truly into the nineties when the series returns and will recapture the fascination they deservedly earned during their first phase of success, but until such time Mr. Hancock should avoid leaving himself so wide open to ridicule. And besides, most people credit the success of the Daleks first and foremost to Raymond Cusick, arguably the true inspiration behind their success!

Despite countless threatening letters to many individuals and organisations over the years, it is interesting to note that *no* incident has ever reached the courts. Certainly a war of words with DWB in 1990 (*see DWB83*) in which we steadfastly maintained our ground quickly resulted in a Mexican stand-off, indicating a certain amount of bluff on Hancock's part?

Meanwhile, another potential wheeze for Roger Hancock to work himself up into a lather about was a television commercial for a furniture store shown in Scotland over Christmas, which depicted a woman peering over a sofa as seen from the point of view of a TV screen. Over the distinctive DOCTOR WHO theme music, a Dalek shouted, *"You'd better get down to Martin and Frost or be exterminated..."*. (Let's just hope she bought herself a new staircase!)...

Ray G Higel

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UK GOLD LOSES ITS GLITTER AMID CLAIMS OF AN 0831 SCAM

FANS tuning in to UK Gold's thirtieth anniversary DOCTOR WHO weekend to discover the results of the 'Viewers Choice' categories were not amused to be confronted by *The Horns of Nimon* and *Warriors of the Deep*, 'winners' of the best companion (K9) and best monster (Silurians and Sea Devils) categories respectively.

Could these paragon examples of DOCTOR WHO at its most embarrassingly entertaining *really* be what the viewers ordered? Well, not exactly, at least according to one source deep within UK Gold's nerve centre who claims that the weekend's contents were in fact decided *before* viewers were invited to send in their votes by post or, more preferably, dial them through on the station's lucrative 48p-a-minute 0831 number! Details of the vote, released only weeks before the weekend, certainly cast doubts on the station's ability to clear each story in time, although UK Gold's press office is maintaining that the selections *were* "legitimate", and point to Tom Baker's victory in the Favourite Doctor section with *Warriors' Gate* as proof!

While the debate over the viewer's choice weekend rages on, another recent development for the satellite company indicates a possible deterioration in standards with the recent departure of programme co-ordinator Tony Ifland. It was Ifland who championed DOCTOR WHO's role as a key player in UK Gold's schedule from the station's offset in November 1992. He subsequently triumphed in having the programme reinstated after it was pulled from its disastrous 5.30pm slot at the beginning of 1993, and succeeded in obtaining the rights to show the Dalek stories. His successor is Steve Lolland, who has been brought in principally to push UK Gold's ratings - and income -upwards as high as possible, with quality apparently a secondary consideration...

•***Destiny of the Daleks***, *The Android Invasion* and *Day of the Daleks* and were shown over Christmas, followed by *The Keys of Marinus*. The TARDIS jumps back to vintage Tom Baker for the remainder of January with (13-18th) *The Face of Evil*, (19-24th) *The Robots of Death* and (25-1st Feb) *The Talons of Weng-Chiang*...

•**The *Genesis of the Daleks*** omnibus was scheduled directly against *The Green Death* on BBC2 on January 9!

WHITEHOUSE QUITS NVLA

VETERAN TV clean-up campaigner, Mary Whitehouse, is to step down as president of the National Viewers and Listeners Association in the spring, she has announced.

Mrs. Whitehouse started her Clean up TV Campaign in January 1964 as a schoolteacher with the intention of ridding the nation of smut, but her priorities soon stretched to other areas of concern, such as the new Saturday afternoon BBC1 science fiction series whose affect on children's minds she was convinced was unhealthily detrimental.

A rally in Birmingham the following May drew over 2000, and the NVLA was officially launched in March 1965. Over the years, while claiming a large membership Whitehouse was the only openly public figure and spokesperson for the organisation, fuelling speculation that she was very much a one-woman crusade, particularly towards the end of her tenure. Nevertheless, the NVLA's constant tirades against all things perceived as un-Christian and corruptable of the young achieved a substantial influence in its thirty years.

DOCTOR WHO was a consistent incurrer of her wrath, procurring the nation's young (she was convinced) into endless bouts of bedwetting, but it was only when graphic displays of violence reached a peak - in 1967, 1976 and 1985 - that she felt it necessary to mount her soapbox and preach publicly about its alleged damaging affect on young minds. While the BBC had a definite stance avoiding kow-towing to Whitehouse's various demands, a letter of complaint about *The Deadly Assassin* episode three prompted discussions at the highest level which resulted in a softening of tone for the then consistent ratings-topping series - a change widely blamed for the subsequent decline in the show's popularity from which it never recovered.

MASTERMIND, BUT NOT MASTERBRAIN!

1993 MASTERMIND Champion and DOCTOR WHO fan Gavin Fuller narrowly failed to win Radio Four's MASTERBRAIN title over Christmas. The Contest, which pits the MASTERMIND and BRAIN OF BRITAIN champions and runners up against one another, was won by this year's BRAIN OF BRITAIN, by 19 points to 18, with the other contestants trailing on 14 and 15...

The crucial round was the first BRAIN OF BRITAIN one, in which a run of five correct answers wins a bonus point, and which left Fuller trailing by 6 to 12 (with the runners-up on 5 and 2). While the two runners-up fared well in the MASTERMIND section, the reigning BRAIN did comparatively badly, almost allowing Fuller (once again taking DOCTOR WHO as his specialist subject, questions set by JNT) to match him — *had* he known who wrote the *Doctor Who Pattern Book*! All in all, a moral victory for Gavin Fuller, as the 'Mind' proved a better all-rounder than the 'Brain'.

A more dubious distinction followed on the 8th February, when Fuller suffered gunking on NOEL'S HOUSE PARTY! As Noel Edmonds observed, it was a shame to spoil that lovely jumper, which was worthy of an appearance on TELLY ADDICTS...

briefly...

•**VERITY LAMBERT, 58, has been listed** as the 65th highest-earning career woman in Britain, by *The Daily Mail*, making £203,000 as an independent film producer in 1993...

•**TOM BAKER recited from Dickens for** a church service broadcast on the BBC on

DIMENSIONS IN TIME AT VISIONS'93 RAISES $4600

JOHN NATHAN-TURNER raised $4600 for Children In Need at Visions '93 in Chicago in November, as fans paid $5 a head to see the charity pantomime *Dimensions in Time*.

The figure incorporates the 800 pairs of 3D specs provided by the Children In Need office for distribution at the event, all of which were sold raising $4000, and $600 donated voluntarily by some who returned for the Saturday showing.

His efforts, however, could have been hampered, amid claims that there may have been other specs in operation over the weekend, brought in from Britain and possibly sold by an unknown source. Any monies collected outside of the official fundraising team had yet to be declared to Children In Need prior to the Christmas holiday period.

Several attendees at the event maintain that a majority of people in the approximately 1000 capacity audience each evening donned 3D glasses, while a box containing a "substantial" number of spectacles was seen being "removed" from the entrance to the screening *after* everyone had been admitted on the final evening.

DWB would like to hear from anyone attending Visions '93 who purchased specs from anyone other than official guests of the convention, and indeed from anyone who could help shed some light on this potential scandal. Since no receipts were issued, it is impossible to ascertain how many extra specs might have been brought into the event, but with around 1800 fans attending Visions '93, there may have been as many as 1200, possibly more.

•**It was** on the strength of the number of fans who saw *Dimensions in Time* - and the fact that promotion for the event made no clearcut distinction between those who would be charged (for the specs), and those admitted free of charge (without) - that an estimated figure of $10,000 was erroneously quoted last issue.

JNT TO EMIGRATE?

RUMOURS are abounding that John Nathan-Turner is in the throes of emigrating to America following a job offer from a New York TV station.

Although no details are known, there is speculation that he might be employed by Fox TV, based in New York and Los Angeles. The company, owned by Rupert Murdoch, recently successfully bid $1.58 billion for the rights to screen National Football League games for the next four years, and has been busy creating a sports department and recruiting production staff. Murdoch is noted for hiring people from England, and one major aspect of US team-sport events is the glitzy and sometimes controversial entertainment that pervades the intervals. Combined with the vast audiences and attention such games command, it would be a job that might appeal to JNT.

As an additional point of interest, Murdoch's video division - CBS/Fox - distributes DOCTOR WHO videos (on a *very* sporadic basis) in America...

ABC in New York is also currently recruiting staff to their sports division to cover World Cup '94, which is hosted by America this summer.

There again, we're probably barking up entirely the wrong tree...

(Right: JNT during his mid-'80s US convention heyday!)

on Christmas Eve...

•RATINGS: ***Planet of the Daleks*** 1)3,651,000, 2) 4,139,000, 3)3,949,000, 4)3,412,000, 5) 3,494,000, 6) 3,608,000. Taking into account that this story was shown at 5.30pm on BBC2 in Scotland, the figures are more or less on a par with Sylvester McCoy's final season, and are only slightly less than those achieved by TOMORROW'SWORLD in the same slot...

•*INFERNO* and *Revelation of the Daleks* have been scheduled for video release in May, the former as a twin pack at £16.99. The price of the single tapes will rise to £11.99 from April. Regular DWB artist Pete Wallbank has completed the cover for *Arc of Infinity*, released in March alongside Colin Howard's *The Green Death*. Boots has been offering recent releases including *Vengeance on Varos*, *Enlightenment*, *Claws of Axos* and *The Daemons* at £6 a throw...

•CONTRARY to popular belief, the Target imprint *will* continue into 1994 with the two Eric Saward novels, *Resurrection of the Daleks* and *Revelation of the Daleks*, released later this year. Reprints are suspended after *The Talons of Weng-Chiang* in February but *will* resume when demand returns...

•JOHN MENZIES the newsagent has commissioned a DOCTOR WHO quiz book to be issued free to purchasers of an unspecified future video release. The 100 questions, composed by DWM's Gary Russell, are said to be slightly more difficult than the Target quiz books of the eighties but still accessible to the public...

•UNIT's 'enrolment hotline', briefly flashed on screen during the UNIT five-minute vignette, resulted in over 2000 calls being made. Anticipating such a response, director Kevin Davies used a genuine line and callers were greeted by a recorded message from Nicholas Courtney congratulating them on passing the first initiative test! Usually when a fictional number is required, the BBC has a catalogue of approved blank numbers provided by British Telecom to choose from...

•THOSE of you still reeling in disbelief at page 19 of last issue can relax...the fellow depicted in our Westminster Bridge Dalek shoot was *not* Jonathan Powell but lookalike Anthony Okker, who works for the Classic Coach Company. He happened to be in the area at the time, and we couldn't resist the opportunity for an early April Fool spoof...

•COLIN BAKER's self-penned Marvel mini-series, *Age of Chaos*, has been put on hold because the British arm of the company is no longer providing comic books for the US market. Gary Russell intends to use the strip in one of Marvel UK's DOCTOR WHO publications at some point, as he told DWB: *"It's too good a story and artwork to let go!"*...

•JNT declined to participate in our challenge to match a pledge of £150 in aid of Children in Need. In the end, thanks to the co-operation of EASTENDERS Producer Leonard Lewis and BBC Picture Publicity, a cheque for £200 was sent on behalf of DWB readers to the appeal. Alan Yentob's office has indicated that he will be prepared to be interviewed on the subject of DOCTOR WHO when time permits, following our offer to pledge £150 in return. With Christmas now out of the way, Yentob is currently tied-up formulating the schedules for winter and spring...

•COMET MINIATURES are adding to their range of self-assembly vinyl kits with a Tom Baker doll out at the end of January and a Jon Pertwee doll in April. A Cyberman kit is being planned for July based on the *Tomb* version to compliment the already available six inch tall Troughton doll. The kits, which come complete with glue and paint, retail at £22.95 each...

THE VALENTINE'S DAY PRICE MASSACRE

Well, that's what it was supposed to be called — but BBC Video's special offer on DOCTOR WHO videos, slashed in price to £7.99, has been brought forward to January 31.

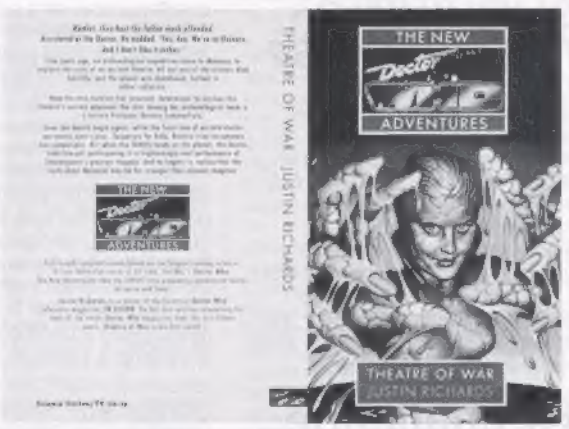
Only three of the five stories currently available in edited or compiled versions are to be remastered, a fact which has been taken as an indication that BBC Video are testing the market for interest in complete editions of previously re-edited tape.

UNEDITED, EPISODIC RE-RELEASES: *The Ark in Space, Day of the Daleks, Pyramids of Mars.*

PLUS: *An Unearthly Child, The Aztecs, The Dominators, The Mind Robber, The Claws of Axos, The Brain of Morbius, Mawdryn Undead, The Curse of Fenric, Daleks - The Early Years, Cybermen - The Early Years, The Time Warrior* and *Terror of the Zygons* (the latter two still only available as compilations)...

•STAR TREK tapes including the original series, the films and most of THE NEXT GENERATION are currently available from a range of stockists including Virgin, Our Price and HMV at £7.99. The Our Price offer ends on 31st January.

Right: *The cover for Theatre of War, published May '94, by stalwart DWB contributor Justin Richards!*



DWB TO STAGE NEBULA '94 IN THE AUTUMN...

PREPARATIONS for DWB's major Liverpool event are hotting up with the prospect of an exciting tie-in with a major video release in the late summer, which we hope to confirm next month.

The tie-in, combined with the lack of a major two-day convention towards the end of the year (Panopticon has been put on hold for a year to recover from the '93 extravaganza), has prompted our event to be rescheduled around September time. The move will should appease regular convention-goers who have written in highlighting an already packed schedule of events to attend this spring (see below).

Readers who responded to last issue's slightly premature advert have had their cheques returned, but will be the first to learn of the finalised details of what promises to be an event with a difference. Keep watching this space...

Convention Digest

AYLCON - 19th Feb Aylesbury; contact M Jones, Kingsmead, Monks Risborough, Berks, HP27 9LN

MIRACLE CITY - 19th March Bishops Stortford, contact 15 Honeymeade, Sawbridgeworth, Herts CM21 0AR.

MANOPTICON - 3rd-4th April Manchester; Contact 15 Harradon Road, Walton, Liverpool L9 0HE.

BLUE BOX - 30th April-2nd May Southampton; Contact 15 Martock Road, Keynsham, Bristol BS18 1XA.

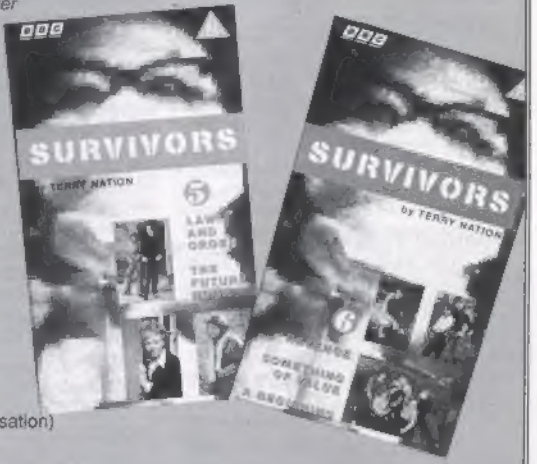
Coming Soon...

Just out...

TIMESLIP: *The Day of the Clone*
STAR TREK: *Firestorm* (LA Graf)
STAR TREK- STAR FLEET ACADEMY: *Survival* (Peter David)
DEEP SPACE 9: *The Forsaken/Dramatis Personae*
DEEP SPACE 9: *Duet/In The Hands of the Prophets*
THE NEXT GENERATION: *Rightful Heir/Second Chances*
THE NEXT GENERATION: *Timescape/Descent*
THE NEW ADVENTURES: *Conundrum* (Steve Lyons)
DOCTOR WHO - *Day of the Daleks* (Terrance Dicks)
27th STAR TREK: *The Starless World* (Gordon Eklund)

February

SPACE 1999: *The Beta Cloud/A Matter of Balance*
SPACE 1999: *The Lambda Factor/The Seance Spectre*
RANDALL & HOPKIRK (DECEASED): *Just for the Record/The Man from Nowhere*
RANDALL & HOPKIRK (DECEASED): *A Sentimental Journey/Somebody Just Walked Over My Grave*
DEPARTMENT S - *The Double Death of Charlie Crippen*/**JASON KING** - *A Red Rose Forever*
DEPARTMENT S - *The Bones of Byron Blaine*/**JASON KING** - *A Kiss for the Beautiful Singer*
THE AVENGERS - *The Dangermakers/The See Through Man*
THE AVENGERS - *Small Game for Big Hunters/The Hidden Tiger*
THE AVENGERS - *Game/They Keep Killing Steed*
3rd **DOCTOR WHO** *Classic Comics 17* (£2.50)
7th **DEEP SPACE 9:** *Fallen Heroes* (Daffyd Hugh)
7th **YOUNG DEEP SPACE 9:** *The Star Ghost* (Brad Strickland)
7th **NEXT GENERATION:** *The Devil's Heart* (Carmen Carter)
7th **STAR TREK:** *Transformations* (Dave Stern/audio)
7th **"The Valentine's Day Price Massacre" - See above**
7th **SURVIVORS:** *Law and Order/the Future Hour*
7th **SURVIVORS:** *Revenge/Something of Value/A Beginning*
17th **THE NEW ADVENTURES:** *No Future* (Paul Cornell)
17th **DOCTOR WHO** *Magazine 210* (£2.50)
17th DOCTOR WHO - *The Robots of Death* (Terrance Dicks)
24th STAR TREK: *Perry's Planet* (Jack Haldeman)



March

THE CHAMPIONS - *The Bodysnatchers/The Survivors*
THE CHAMPIONS - *The Gunrunners/The Mission*
7th **DOCTOR WHO** - *The Green Death*
7th **DOCTOR WHO** - *Arc of Infinity*
7th **DEEP SPACE 9** - *Warped* (KW Jeter - Hardback)
7th **THE NEXT GENERATION** - *Sarek* (AC Crispin - Hardback novelisation)
17th **THE NEW ADVENTURES** - *Tragedy Day* (Gareth Roberts)
17th **DOCTOR WHO** - *Decalogue* (editor Stephen James Walker)
17th DOCTOR WHO - *The Talons of Weng Chiang* (Terrance Dicks)
17th **THE AVENGERS** Programme Guide (Topping/Cornell/Day)

KEY: **Bold = first release; Novels are listed with author's name in brackets, the rest being video releases and magazines...**

AN ILLUSTRATED HHGTTG GUIDE...

A LARGE coffee table book version of THE HITCH-HIKER'S GUIDE TO THE GALAXY is due out this August, in its first -ever illustrated edition.

Kevin Davies, director of the *Making of HHGTTG* video and animator on the original TV series is the art director for publishers Orion. The artwork will be computer graphic of a higher standard than could be accomplished on TV, with the original cast use, wherever possible to reproduce scenes from the classic series.

briefly...

•Wild Palms has turned out to be one of the worst selling BBC Videos ever, despite the efforts to secure the rights for their first-ever non-BBC release...

•Red Dwarf V is tentatively scheduled for video release in April...

•QUANTUM LEAP returned to BBC2 on the 4th January with *The Leaping of the Shrew*, and continues through the rest of the season on Fridays at 9pm. The BBC has also purchased rights to a lull repeat run of the series...

•Have British telefantasy fans ever had it so good? LOIS AND CLARKbegan 8th Jan, and continues at 5.30pm on Saturdays... PLANET OF THE APES began a 13 episode Channel 4 repeat run on Sunday 9th January at 10.45pm... RED DWARF from the beginning through season six commenced on Friday, January 7th at 9pm, BBC2...

•C4 are understood to have bought BABYLON 5 for transmission from April...

BLAKE'S 7 REPEATS SPEARHEADED BY VIDEO BONANZA

BLAKE'S 7 is tentatively scheduled for a complete BBC2 repeat run from April, reportedly filling the then newly vacant STAR TREK slot.

BBC Video are planning to simultaneously reducing the prices of the BLAKE tapes to £7.99, akin to recently selected titles in the DOCTOR WHO range.

•A revised version of the BLAKE'S 7 Programme Guide is planned by Virgin for December, including different photos, information about fan clubs, and original material provided by the actors.

•The results of DWB's BLAKE'S 7 survey will be printed in DWB125, which will be a Blake-orientated issue including the survey results...

AVENGERS ON SATELLITE

SATELLITE classics channel Bravo has bought the rights to all 136 surviving episodes of THE AVENGERS, for screening five days a week at 8pm from 7th February.

Bravo intend to run each episode uncut (as opposed to America's A&E Network which trimmed up to five minutes from the Blackman episodes), and *without* adverts.

•Lumiere's AVENGERS volume 7 will feature the episodes *The Dangermakers* and *The See Through Man*,despite last minute efforts to replace the former with the other episode featuring Warren Mitchell as Brodny, *Two's a Crowd*.

•Polygram plan to release all 26 episodes of THE NEW AVENGERS uncut...

SURVIVING THE MUTANTS?

A pilot has been shot for a possible new science fiction series for the Prime Time Network which already offers TIME TRAX, the new KUNG FU series and BABYLON 5.

The new series has not yet settled upon a name, but will supposedly either be called HAVEN or ISLAND CITY. Produced and Written by Jonathan Glassner, the story is set on Earth a century from now and deals with the tragic consequences of a supposed fountain of youth offered by genetic engineering. Five years after the treatment became popular most of the population mutates into psychotic creatures called "recessives". The few remaining normal humans establish a stronghold in an island city. Besides planning missions to rescue other humans, the new society must formulate rules for dealing with clones, half-breeds and recessives. The pilot should air in February or March, with a decision about approving a series to follow.

A NEWCOMER TO AVOID

NBC appears to have fallen under a sci-fi curse as punishment for its cancellation of the original STAR TREK series. First it committed itself to a full year and millions of dollars for SEAQUEST, sight unseen, only to be undone by both Angela Lansbury and Lois Lane. Now it's added VIPER to its schedule as a new midseason series, starting off with a two-hour Sunday movie then exiling it to Fridays at 8pm.

Although created by the team of Danny Bilson and Paul De Meo who were responsible for THE FLASH - a clever and stylish series cancelled too soon - VIPER is a stultifying collection of cliches only slightly spiced up by state of the art morphing effects and multiple car chases. In fact, the major reason to stay awake through the whole two hours was to nail down just which other series or film each bit reminded you of.

So, by way of KNIGHT RIDER and STREET HAWK we get our ROBOCOP hero whose brain has been wiped and a false past and identity substituted. You see, in the near future The Outfit is running all the serious crime in a major city, and this pervasive criminal network zips away from the scene of crimes in souped up cars that the police seem woefully incapable of catching on their best day.

Never fear, Julian Wilkes (Dorian Harewood) has been spending millions of taxpayer dollars developing a super crime-fighting car - which just happens to look like Chrysler Corporation's new hugely expensive Viper sports car. The inventor's one problem is that nobody is skilled enough to drive his car. Enter The Outfit's top wheel man, who has hit a wall and landed in the hospital with major injuries. The authorities decide to remake him by wiping his memories, altering his appearance and substituting a history as a police officer as a new identity. The new improved Joe Astor (unknown James McCaffrey) then conquers the VIPER and goes forth to chase down bad guys.

And so it goes. The fact that The Outfit soon realises who they are up against and inform him who he really is, or that they get crooked politicians to shut down the Viper project are incidental to the basic fact that the show will live or die by how much the viewer enjoys watching the car go into "defender mode" (it acquires protective plating much like the Bat Mobile) and fire an EM weapon to immobilise the enemy car. And by how much the viewer is prepared to ignore the surrounding idiocy — for example, the police seem to have no air support in their battle against the forces of evil and (best of all) when our anti-hero chases down the bad guys he then gets out of the super car to subdue them in old fashioned shootouts, armed only with a handgun and no body armour!

If just seeing the Viper gives you goosebumps, tune in. Otherwise don't expect to make it through the first 15 minutes. **Kathleen Toth**

Trek Wars: Majel's challenge...

MAJEL BARRETT RODDENBERRY has publicly challenged William Shatner to debate his *Star Trek Memories* with her on television.

Just such an offer was made by NBC's Tom Snyder when Shatner appeared on his show to promote the book and his other projects. Mrs. Roddenberry also told a convention audience that Shatner was not around the set often enough to know what went on in the old days.

That other disaffected crewmate, Jimmy Doohan, made some unflattering comparisons between Captain Kirk and Captain Picard when meeting with the press to publicise his stint on the day time soap THE BOLD AND THE BEAUTIFUL. Calling Patrick Stewart a "fabulous actor," Doohan said Picard is the type of Captain Gene Roddenberry wanted in the first place. He added that he knew Gene was quite displeased with the way the first Star TREK turned out.

Doohan was also highly impressed by the way TNG manages to give all the main cast several featured episodes a year, something he says could never happen around Bill Shatner.

Star Trek news

•DS9's Colm Meaney continues to juggle film work with his series commitment — his next project putting him on screen with Anthony Hopkins. He has also been cast in *Scarlett*, the television mini-series sequel to *Gone With The Wind* which starts filming in Ireland next summer.

•Jonathan Frakes and Michael Dorn are seriously discussing producing their own low budget film projects after TNG to allow them to pursue their interest in directing. (What's wrong with working for Roger Corman like everyone else?)

•Future episodes following on from *The Pegasus*, *Homeward*, *Sub Rosa* and *Lower Decks* include a Data story called *Know Thine Self* in which he loses all memory and must start life over again.

•Counselor Troi is also up for promotion to full Commander.

•Rumour of the month: Sean Connery will star in the STAR TREK: VOYAGER pilot. If this proves to be true, it will put William Shatner's nose still further out of joint — he wanted Connery to play Sybok in *Star Trek V*, even naming the God Planet Sha Ka'Ree after him, only to find that the ex-Bond preferred to work on *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade!*

•Ratings: TNG and DS9 continue this season to be the number 1 and number 2 syndicated hour drama programs, but DS9's figures are about 25% lower than TNG. BABYLON 5 begins in late January. NBC and ABC experimented with showing repeat episodes of SEAQUEST and LOIS AND CLARK in 10pm weeknight time slots, and NOT opposite each other. Both did somewhat better than their average Sunday night viewing figures but replacement series are still scheduled to take over the time periods vacated by early cancellations.

•Patrick Stewart is scheduled to host SATURDAY NIGHT LIVE on Feb. 5, after nearly a year of talk that he might be offered the spot. Of course, the show is long since past its glory days with Belushi, Radner, Murray, or even Eddie Murphy or Dana Carvey, but it is still a highly sought gig in Hollywood to host the live show. This season has been one of the more dismal in recent memory except for surprisingly enjoyable weeks with Charleton Heston and Sally Fields(!).

Will Patrick be tempted into something like William Shatner's infamous "get a life" skit? Or will he even make it to Saturday night? Stewart created a furore two years ago by walking out when GOOD MORNING AMERICA paid a live visit to the TNG set for its morning chat show, objecting to what he felt was an intention to treat the show with campy disrespect. Stay tuned.

That's assuming, of course, that he returns to America alive — he finished his last show in London on Saturday 8th January and was due to report to the set at 6:15am Monday in LA!

•US and UK Tabloids have reported that the NEXT GEN movie will feature Lursa and B'Etor, and see the demise of both Kirk and an Enterprise. The smart money is discounting these reports, as the National Enquirer - which is usually first with accurate TREK leaks - has yet to speak up...

Kathleen Toth

Visions '93

I CLEARLY REMEMBER reading all about the Spirit of Light Ultimate Celebration to mark DOCTOR WHO's 20th anniversary, which managed the (still) unique feat of uniting Troughton, Pertwee, Baker (still - just - the one and only in those days) and Davison live on stage. I was jealous, and who wouldn't be at the thought of all those WHO names gathered together.

Ten years on, my air of expectancy was high as I flew in the night before Visions '93, as the event had been advertised as featuring all five surviving Doctors and a host of ex-companions and other notable British sci-fi TV names.

Alas, the little clause at the bottom of the ad read "Guests may cancel at any time due to conflicting professional commitments", and many people were disappointed by the non-attendance of Messrs Pertwee, Baker I and McCoy, but we did get Doctors five and six, and almost everyone else billed (apart from Nicholas Courtney and Gareth Thomas) — some twenty three guests in all: Peter Davison, Colin Baker, Carole Ann Ford, William Russell, Wendy Padbury, John Levene, Elisabeth Sladen, John Leeson, Anthony Ainley, Nicola Bryant, Sophie Aldred, Jacqueline Pearce, Jan Chappell, John Abineri, Jeremy Bulloch, Mark Ryan, Danny John-Jules, Bill Bags, Christopher Barry, Jeremy Bentham, Jean-Marc & Randy L'Officier, John Nathan-Turner, John Peel and Gary Downie...

Of the many panels that I caught perhaps the most enjoyable featured Elisabeth Sladen and Wendy Padbury, two highly talented ladies who are down-to-earth and interesting speakers, and who were both particularly keen that their late friends Ian Marter and Patrick Troughton should be remembered on such an occasion. The on stage sparring of Davison and Baker was perhaps the top attraction — at one stage Baker won a round of applause for answering that he had "six" cats. "If you're going to applaud someone just for saying how many pets they've got then I've got two dogs" countered Davison, setting the scene for one-upmanship over the three days which saw Davison winning by claiming six bathrooms and five VCRs!

The pairing of Gary Downie, JNT and Christopher Barry was rather curious, as Barry was an accomplishedWHO directors ignored by JNT throughout the eighties, while Downie's presence was superfluous and no doubt instigated by JNT's belief that his 'longtime companion' had been a major force behind the scenes. The poor attendance of these panels must speak for itself.

Friday and Saturday saw the somewhat controversial screenings of the full *Dimensions in Time*, which attendees could see in exchange for $5 at the door (the first 800 receiving a free pair of 3D specs). To give credit to the American fans, normally presented as sycophantic, most of those I spoke to seemed to share my own opinion of this embarrassing mess. For a further $25 on the Saturday, fans could watch the variety show which proved rather refreshing. Anthony Ainley kicked off the proceedings splendidly winning tumultuous applause, which was rather unfortunate for the next act, JNT, whose attempt at singing was greeted with much hilarity as he failed to keep up with the piano accompaniment! More appreciated were William Russell and Carole Ann Ford who contributed some Shakespeare, Lis Sladen and her daughter Sadie reciting some poetry and Mark Ryan demonstrating that he's more than a match for Sinatra as a crooner. Jackie Pearce told a tasteful tale of Cinderella's vagina turning into a pumpkin (!), Colin Baker recalled Joyce Grenfall's monologues and Peter Davison showed his musical side with a song about an American police officer. Other attractions ranged from Gary Downie's awful 'alternative' comedy, JNT's mediocre singing, and Sophie Aldred and Nicola Bryant's wonderful teaming to do *Doctor Who he had a farm...* This was so much fun that something similar should be arranged in this country - after all, with the programme still on hiatus, how many times can the guests answer the same questions?

Away from the WHO stars, Danny John-Jules proved a big hit, while the trio from ROBIN OF SHERWOOD seemed a bit bemused by it all but entered into the spirit of things unashamedly nevertheless, and the appearance of Jan Chappell and Jacqueline Pearce made an entertaining pairing for BLAKE'S 7 fans. Bill Baggs' videos are fast catching on and the reaction to his work must give him confidence for future projects, while Jeremy Bentham ran through the history of DOCTOR WHO in slide and video form, along with his Top Five Worst DOCTOR WHO records (all of them unbearable).

Having attended two Panopticons, one lecture weekend and a handful of smaller events in my career as a fan, I can certainly say that Visions '93 was one of the most relaxed, enjoyable brushes with the WHO phenomenon that I've experienced. Guests mingled freely when not involved with a scheduled event (the DWAS exec. would have had heart attacks!), and there was none of the cliquey feel that sometimes pervades British run gatherings — as one guest told me "It's enjoyable this year, no egos to contend with."John Levene (or Anthony Blake as American Equity knows him) made a very funny compere, even declaring that he had to turn down the chance to warm up the Golden Globe Awards to attend...we believe you John!

Even though the 1600 attendance was a far cry from the 7000 a decade ago, on the strength of Visions '93 fandom is still alive and well in the States During the Colin Baker/Anthony Ainley panel, they were asked about the idea of Spielberg taking over. Baker's declaration that he thought the Doctor should be British, and that he hoped money would not cause the loss of good stories and characterisation was greeted with a huge round of applause. Thus proving that we are hands united across the ocean in our desire to see our favourite Time Lord re-established soon! **(8)**

Dimensions, Planet, Amblin and 30 years...

Simon Lewis
Lewes, Sussex

Well, *Dimensions in Time* wasn't up to much was it? Everything that was wrong with the JNT era without any of the bits that were right. Okay, so it was for Children In Need and classed as a pantomime, but... Having learnt no lessons from the past, there were all the endless 'continuity' references for the fans to slobber over, which in turn surely alienated the general public who must have wondered who the hell all these different characters were that kept wandering in and out of the 'plot' without any announcement or explanation, some of whom looked about ninety and must surely have been unrecognisable to some of the fans let alone anyone else.

Everyone looked bored with the whole affair and only Davison and McCoy seemed to click into their roles convincingly. The phone-in vote as to which *EastEnders* character should play a pivotal part in the story was made an absolute farce by the three seconds in which the winner actually appeared. Noel Edmonds didn't seem to think much of the second part featuring in his show. Oh and the 3D wasn't that impressive either. All *Dimensions in Time* probably did for the public was to reinforce the impression of DOCTOR WHO as nothing but endless running around with jokey monsters and silly situations, and is unlikely to spark a clamour for its return...

The Monday night Anniversary Special on the other hand, was about as good a celebration of the DOCTOR WHO phenomenon as one could reasonably expect. With an excellent selection of clips and specially made sequences, Kevin Davies did the show proud. Watching this made me realise once again just why Doctor Who has a special place in my heart, recapturing all the old magic that should never be forgotten. *Dimensions in Time* made me reluctant to own up to being a fan, but *30 Years in the TARDIS* again made me happy to stand up and be counted.

One or two niggles, yes — The Master got a bit of a bum deal (no Ainley at all) although this was redressed slightly by the five minute special two weeks later, and UNIT was badly under-represented, as was McCoy's Doctor to a lesser degree. And wasn't the 'fashion' sequence a direct lift from *Resistance is Useless*? But these are just minor quibbles in what was otherwise a very well presented and affectionate tribute, which must surely present a strong case for the show's resurrection...

As for *Planet of the Daleks* being selected for the Anniversary showing, naturally I've enjoyed seeing it again but agree that many better representations could have been lifted from the show's history — surely a classic from the Tom Baker era, clearly the most popular Doctor. Given the choice of recent repeats, someone at the BBC obviously thinks Jon Pertwee is the Doctor everyone wants to see...

John Pettigrew
Fife

Dimensions in Time. Actually it wasn't that bad. Despite the gimmick trappings of 3D and the EASTENDERS cast, it certainly wasn't the blasphemy that I was expecting. The saddest aspect of it all was the fact that it was so short — I could easily sit through a four episode version of this Children In Need skit, and such a prospect sounds more enticing than watching *Battlefield*.

Dimensions in Time certainly shouldn't be taken too seriously by the fans, it was only a bit of fun but credit where credit's due. JNT could have done a lot worse although he did manage to indulge his fetish for roping in well known guest stars in WHO to excess; the EASTENDERS. I agree that the ex-producer is milking his association with the programme for the sole prospect of making money for himself but this inoffensive venture must go alongside the video release of Shada in recent years as JNT's better efforts.

Despite having the simplest of plots, a clumsy attempt to feature all the surviving Doctors together in one "show", it was good to see the actors and actresses involved back on TV. It was no consolation for a new programme proper but it was good as far as it went. Certainly, pushing this production as the spearhead for the Children In Need appeal coupled with the Kevin Davies/Late Show 30 years retrospective and the repeat screening of *Planet* can only push public awareness of DOCTOR WHO back to the fore. Surely there must be something tangible brewing at the BBC since they've not pushed DOCTOR WHO as much as this since, oh I don't know, *The Five Doctors*. Why would they flog a dead show? Simply to make a killing with the video releases and other official merchandise? Or is that far too cynical...?

Kenneth Macleod
Isle of Harris

Planet of the Daleks was not the wisest choice the BBC could have made to mark the Anniversary. I don't believe that too many fans could have been happy with the shambles that they saw, and it could only have re-inforced the casual viewers' notion of DOCTOR WHO being a silly, embarrassingly tacky children's show.

Planet is one of the series' worst productions; a plodding, un-naturally protracted script, along with truly awful (never mind 'indifferent') direction from David Maloney, makes for rather painful viewing. The low points include the escape up the ventilation shaft, the frozen Dalek army, the Spiridons and the so called cliffhangers — everyone a dud. If the series survey deadline had been extended for another month, then David Maloney and *Planet of the Daleks*, like Richard Martin and *The Web Planet*, would have sunk like a stone.

Jon Pertwee himself is pretty poor in this one, concentrating more on his image than the script. Note how, in the first episode, while suffocating in the TARDIS, he takes time out to change his costume. And he leaves the police box doors open so the fungus plants can spit into the console room to their heart's content.

Nope, not the best way to celebrate the 30th year.

Steven Grace
Herne Bay, Kent

Thanks for the DWB 30th Anniversary special. Presenting the results alongside the articles was a great idea, and it helped to present a picture of

that era and what are generally regarded as the greats and flops of the time. A great read, and a splendid presentation to celebrate the anniversary.

US Who — I can only hope that someone like Jeff Goldblum or James Belushi (WILD PALMS has won me over!) gets the part, as they are not just stars but have actually earned the reputation through their ability.

I must disagree with Nick Cooper, though, as I think *Planet of the Daleks* is an excellent example of the WHO mythology. A Tom Baker story would have been too predictable, and I suppose the Beeb thought they could not avoid using the old pepperpots. And the snippets before the start of each episode are a brilliant way to introduce the programme.

R Clark
Hanwell, London

Well, *Dimensions in Time* lived down to my expectations. Plotless, aimless and above all hopeless. Only JNT could be so oblivious to its true awfulness that he would **want** a writer's credit on it. Still, it's the curse of charity work — think of most charity records... *30 Years in the Tardis* was OK but was a little aimless.

About the Amblin rumours, it might get Americanised, but a well made American WHO is not the worst thing that could happen. We don't have to assume they'll cast a celeb instead of an actor. I know I'd be happy with the idea of Ron Perlman as Doctor no.8.

Anthony Goodman/Roger Barrett, I'm afraid your prank doesn't quite make you PT Barnum's reincarnation. It's a fact of life that if you tell people something they want to hear they'll probably believe it. If you want some fun leave it until March, change your name again and claim you changed your story because the people who do hold *Tenth Planet 4* upped their price, but that you've now recovered it, and I'm sure someone will believe you. In the end though you're the one who changed his name and would only be interviewed in silhouette, and it actually cost you money! Who's the saddest of all? If I watch the missing episodes vignette I'm looking at him!

Andrew Setchfield
Chingford

"I wouldn't be surprised if this appaling travesty put millions off from tuning into the documentary just two days later..."

I failed to comprehend that such a ludicrous statement could in any sense be taken seriously; therefore, I was not surprised to read in the last issue of DWB that the aforementioned quote is attributed to a certain Ian Levine: a man who seems determined to scatter any last vestige of credibility trying to linger on unabated. This 'travesty', or *Dimensions in Time* in layman's English, may very well not have been Mr Levine's ideal concept of DOCTOR WHO, but to blame it for the *30 Years in the TARDIS* documentary's poor ratings defies credulity.

If viewers were so disenchanted with the 'deal' the good Doctor was given by Children In Need, I hardly think those viewers would have tuned in for part two (but if the ratings are to be believed, more people watched the conclusion than watched the initial episode). To me, it seems a little (well actually, extremely) far fetched to say viewers, feeling that the special portrayed DOCTOR WHO and entertainment in general in the worst possible light, would tune in again for the same thing the following day, and then take out wrath on a completely different programme. Could it actually be that *Dimensions in Time* was a resounding success, as reflected in the ratings, and *30 Years in the TARDIS* was less of a success because it was a documentary?

Dimensions in Time was not supposed to be a top class piece of drama to show DOCTOR WHO at its best; it was not supposed to be the start of a serious continuation of the Doctor's exploits. The intention, as far as I can gather (and indeed, as far as I am concerned) was to be a short skit to help with the fundraising for Children In Need, with a secondary aim to tie in with the 30th anniversary of the show. It may be disappointing that no new series has been commissioned in the last four years, but at least the BBC acknowledges that DOCTOR WHO is still very much alive and part of the schedules in 1993, proving there is still interest in the programme.

Perhaps we should look at *Dimensions in Time* as a testing of the water; which can only bode well for the programme's future. After all, for their skit the BBC could have chosen any number of current BBC productions. Instead they chose DOCTOR WHO. Would they do the same for ADAM ADAMANT LIVES!, BLAKE'S 7, THE TRIPODS or STAR COPS? Of course not, because there is no chance of those being resurrected. Like it or not, John Nathan-Turner and the Children in Need team have done the programme a big favour: keeping DOCTOR WHO as a current concern and something people can identify with. Without such publicity DOCTOR WHO has no future.

Raymond Twatt
Uddington

Whatever the individual merits, in the eyes of the fans, of the stories contained in (particularly) the last four years of DOCTOR WHO it would be foolish to suggest that these years were anything less than a popular and critical failure, and I think that this is the main reason why there has been such a long hiatus, so much prevarication on the part of the BBC bosses, and possibly also explains why the extremely fan-orientated *The Dark Dimension* fell by the wayside. I quite enjoyed stories such as *The Curse of Fenric*, *Remembrance of the Daleks* and *Ghost-Light*, possibly because I was prepared to like them, and would have watched them anyway, but I doubt the same is true of the general public, who were looking for something which would enthrall and entertain without: (a) constant continuity references - only interesting to fans and downright confusing to other viewers, and (b) the need for a video recorder to enable the plot to be deciphered on repeated viewings. I do not envy whoever takes over the programme. Their task is huge, akin to having to rebuild a once-grand Rome. I would like to think that the person who makes the crucial decisions realises that any DOCTOR WHO of the nineties, as in that of the sixties and seventies, will have to appeal to the general public as well as the fans — the latter incidentally being very much in the minority — in order to justify anything other than an extremely meagre budget.

Despite the fact that there has been no new DOCTOR WHO on BBC1 since 1989, I'm far happier as a fan than at any time since I joined my local group in 1988. It's strange to say, but I looked forward to seeing *Planet of the Daleks* far more than if it had been a new season with Sylvester McCoy in the role. I think this must be because, having seen all but one of the Pertwee adventures in perfect quality on UK Gold and BBC Video, I know that it will not disappoint in the same way that the majority of seasons 22 - 26 did (for me at least) at the time they were shown.

I'm also more optimistic because BBC1, under Alan Yentob, is definitely taking a step in the right direction: DOCTOR WHO still needs considerable restoration in the eyes of the public before a new series can be contemplated, and repeats and well chosen videos have an important part to play in this. In fact I think I will modify my above statement: I'm happier because there has been no new DOCTOR WHO on TV since 1989. In fact I've heard more people commenting favourably on the BBC2 and UK Gold repeats than I ever heard mentioning Sylvester McCoy's stories. Perhaps this has something to do with the high "cringe factor" which plagued many of the seventh Doctor's tales!

I hope then that the screening of *Planet of the Daleks* on BBC1 and the subsequent documentary has reacquainted a majority audience with those elements which made DOCTOR WHO such a success initially — the mixing of the strange and the familiar, the old and the new, and the frightening and the reassuring — for it is in these that the future of the programme lies.

THUMBS UP FOR THE DWARF

Ronny Greenberg
Glasgow

I agree entirely with KJ Park's comments (DWB 122).

There is absolutely no reason why the genres of humour and science-fiction should not overlap, and this is detrimental to neither genre. RED DWARF is a good science-fiction programme and a good comedy.

It would be a different matter if the programme was seen to be sending up the science fiction genre, as the *Dimensions in Time* travesty and certain DOCTOR WHO McCoy stories did, but RED DWARF is simply a comedy set in space. The humour arises occasionally from the situations and mainly from the interaction between the characters.

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Ron Thornton

Ron Thornton at work (© Foundation Imaging 1993)

From Blake's 7 through Doctor Who and Captain Power to Babylon 5, effects wizard Ron Thornton has worked his way across the whole range of telefantasy, pioneering a new FX technique in the process. Interviewed by John S Hall...

DWB: When did you first get involved in the field of visual effects design?

Ron Thornton: I was working as a flight dispatcher at Gatwick Airport, and I just basically quit my job because it wasn't fun anymore. Someone took me to see *Alien* in London, and it dawned on me partway through the movie that somebody could actually make money building plastic spaceships! That was quite amusing to me, and I thought, "Well, I've got nothing else to do at the moment, so I might as well give it a try."

So I built a few, just on spec, and I showed them to Mat Irvine at the BBC. He pretty much gave me a contract right there and then to do some work for them. Three months or so later I was a staff member there, working on the new series of Blake's 7. Actually, before I joined the BBC, I built the *Scorpio* for Blake's 7 in several different sizes, out of my front room at home, then went on to be a staff member.

How old were you at this time?

Well, I was born in '57, how about that? Twenty-two.

Did you ever work on Hitch-Hiker's Guide To The Galaxy?

No. I arrived just too late to do that; I wish I had. Actually, I ended up fixing up the Vogon ship, because it was going to go into a museum, so that was really fun from a fan's point of view.

What other Blake's 7 work did you do besides the *Scorpio* models?

Oh gosh, there was loads of it! Between Bill Pearson, myself, and Martin Bower, we built all of the ships for that season. Martin built Sleer's ship, and that was just a straight subcontract. I built one for a character called Cancer, which was a sort of black spaceship. There was a green shuttlecraft that I did for one of the later episodes — it was so long ago that I can barely remember. All sorts of props, too. There was a periscope-type video viewing device that they had on set that I built. A lot of the actual instrumentation panels for the inside of the *Scorpio* I built.

What was the atmosphere like, during that last season of Blake's 7?

It was OK. I mean, I was in a position where I was very much a fan, and I really enjoyed the stuff a lot. That doesn't mingle too well with the BBC mentality. One of the guys there told me once, "It's only television, it's visual chewing gum for the masses." I didn't agree with that, and that's a prime recipe for burn-out when the people that you're working under have got that attitude about it. And that's why I left. I really enjoyed doing it and I really wanted to do it.

I suggested it would be very easy to set up a motion control system there, and they said, "No, no, no, we want to do it the old way." They didn't want to put in motion control system or anything like that. They didn't even want to have cameras there full-time! One of the major problems is they'd bring in news cameramen to shoot effects footage. Effects cameramen know how to shoot anything. Ordinary cameramen can never quite make the jump to doing effects 'cos they just don't understand how it works. That's how a lot of the stuff would end up looking cheesy.

How did this lead to your involvement in Doctor Who?

When you're working with the BBC Visual Effects Department, you're basically a pool of labour that they put on different projects at whim. I just happened to have an affinity for doing some science fiction-type stuff, so I got to work on several episodes of Doctor Who. I actually quit the place after my first experience of working under one of the apprentice designers. It wasn't a pleasant experience at all, so I left and I then continued to work as a subcontractor. I would subcontract with designers I got along with.

So you started on Blake's 7, and that led up to Doctor Who, starting with *Warriors' Gate*?

That was just prop guns. *Warriors' Gate* was the very, very first job I ever did. It was actually quite amusing because obviously I was very green at the time, and Mat had asked me to make the guns out of cold-cast aluminium. It's like, "Hmm, I don't know how you cast aluminium cold, but I'll make them anyway." So I got them cast out of aluminium - they were actually solid metal guns! The poor actors were carrying around these things that really weighed, and what Mat actually wanted me to do was to cast them out of fibre-glass resin with aluminium powder in it, but I didn't know that at the time.

Oh dear...

That was kind of amusing. I've still got one of the guns somewhere, and it's just so heavy! I keep looking back at and thinking, "Oh my God, what was I thinking?"

Which Peter Davison episodes did you work on?

Castrovalva was one of them — I can't remember all of them — that was the main one, 'cos I rebuilt the TARDIS console.

What did you do to the console? It was getting pretty beat up by then.

Oh God, the thing, it's amazing! It's got an old washing machine motor in the bottom — I mean, they've completely redone it since, for *The Five Doctors* — but it used to have an old washing machine motor in the bottom of it, with all these cranks and pulleys, to make the Plexiglass tube in the middle go up and down. It was just a nightmare! It was so old, and the wood was also starting to get a bit rotten — it was very flaky. What I had to do was modify it, put monitors in it, and have boxes for some of the special gags — 'cos you know if there's something script-specific the Doctor has to do, you have to build it into the console.

Can you remember any of the other stories you were involved in?

No, not offhand. After I got out, I did some work for Steve Drewett, who at the time was still a designer at the BBC. I worked with him for *The Two Doctors*. It was a whole bunch of things, like nasty surgical tools, one of which was a surgical chainsaw that worked. Another was a multi-needle syringe which had retractable needles, and when you pulled the trigger, there was a vial of liquid that would drain away. They were all pretty nasty — it was fun! I also made the Sontaran guns, the big ones that looked like motorcycle fuel tanks. Steve wanted to try out a gag where you blow a podium powder out of the front of them, and it would give a small fireball — it's an old magician's trick. It was kind of effective, kind of amusing. And so we tried, in our low-budget way, to squeeze that into the guns. And it worked quite well.

What sort of effects did you do for The Tripods?

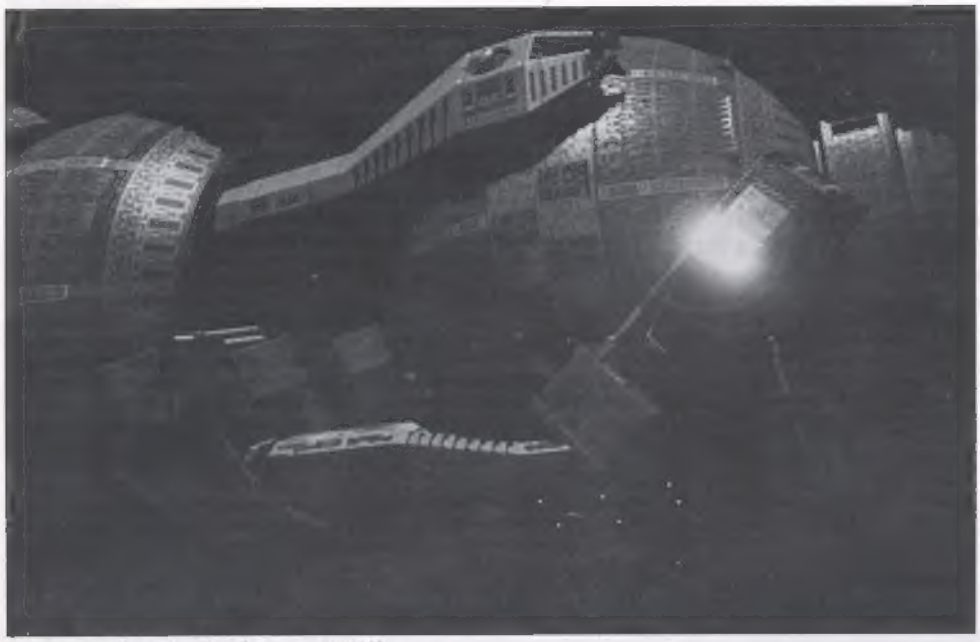
[Thinks for a moment] I made a bunch of flexible tentacles for the first episodes. That's pretty much all I can remember.

This was after your Doctor Who work, right?

Yes, with the exception of *The Two Doctors*. *The Two Doctors* was the last thing I did before I left England.

Why did you leave England?

It was actually a financial decision. I'd known people out here [in California] for some time, and I'd had an open invitation to work with David Stipes, a designer who's done a lot of things like V — an enormous amount of stuff. The BBC decided in September or October that for that particular year — which at the time I think was '84 — they were going to have no further subcontractors doing work. The Head of Department was Peter Pegrum at the time; he basically said, "That's it, no more outside subcontractors. We've used up our budget for the whole year, and we won't be taking on any more outside subcontractors until April."



Space Station Babylon 5 (© Foundation Imaging 1993)

And so I was like, "Uh-oh." I'm all of a sudden in deep trouble. So I basically came out here and started working for David Stipes. Initially, I thought it was a temporary thing, but I began to realize these people had a far better attitude towards doing the job, and they actually appreciated it when you went a little bit further than usual.

How did this lead up to your founding Foundation Imaging?

I've always been interested in science fiction. Through the numerous jobs that I've done with various people, I've been pretty much involved with space stuff whenever I can be, basically because I love it and enjoy doing it. One of those instances was David Jones and John Copeland — David Jones being a designer from the old Hartland days and John Copeland being a producer — called me up to Canada to do CAPTAIN POWER AND THE SOLDIERS OF THE FUTURE. There was a lot of miniature work; I ended up running the department and they really liked the way in which I could get stuff done and get it done inexpensively, 'cos a lot of money had been wasted.

When it came to them hearing about BABYLON 5 — because it was through the same production company — they initially asked me to bid on it, and this was six years ago! So we went through bid after bid after bid on BABYLON 5 — traditional models, we're talking about — and just after CAPTAIN POWER I bought an Amiga. My at-the-time next-door neighbour Paul Bryant and I were just playing around with it. It was very powerful in terms of what it could do graphically, and it was a very useful little machine, but nobody had come up with anything decent.

Then New Tek came out with the Video Toaster — I think this was October '91, but I can't be absolutely sure — I bought one immediately just to see what it was like, and I though, "Well, I've got a bit of time on my hands, let's try and see if I can push this thing to make a spaceship look real." So I basically took one of the model ships that I'd done years ago in England and I tried to put it into the system. I built it bit by bit, doing all the texture mapping and everything else to try and make it as realistic as I possibly could. It was a total baptism by fire, because some of the things I came up with were just **awful!** Y'know, every now and again you think, "Ah, this is never gonna be able to do it."

But then one day we were working on *Terminator 2*, doing the guns for it, and one of my P.A.'s came downstairs and said, "There's something of beauty appearing on your computer upstairs." I went up and there it was; it looked totally real, and that was the point at which I thought, "Hmm, this has potential." From then onwards I ended up being in very close contact with the company that created the Video Toaster, and my now-partner, Paul Bryant, started to get involved with it. When it came time to do BABYLON 5, and they were actually going to go on it, I did a bunch of tests on the computer. They were very impressed by it, and we ended up having to go to pitch sessions at Warner Bros. and everything. It was quite scary! But they picked it up, and the rest is *l'histoire*.

What sort of things did you do for *Terminator 2*?

Guns. We made the Endoskeleton battle rifles.

Have you done work for other Hollywood films?

Yeah, we did the train crash for *The Addams Family*, and we built the chess set for that as well — the chess set where Thing plays with Gomez. I've gone through so many, it's not true! But I must admit that a great deal of the stuff I've worked on has usually been reasonably low-budget, some of which has been seen and some of which has not. Let's see... *Real Genius*, *Night of the Creeps*, *Class of 1999* — I designed all of the robots for that.

Ever done anything for THE NEXT GENERATION?

One of our ships has been on THE NEXT GENERATION, in *Booby Trap*. They find this big old derelict ship in an asteroid field, and the *Enterprise* gets trapped. The first thing Picard says is, "My God, it's ancient. It's a relic!" I just burst out laughing at that point.

Did Foundation ever do any work on MAX HEADROOM?

Foundation wasn't in existence then. In terms of MAX HEADROOM's visual effects, 90% of it's video post-production effects. But in terms of the model shots, it was all done by a company called Xenon. I ended up working for Xenon just after MAX HEADROOM. One of the people who was working for me whilst I was in Canada worked on it, and he did the rebuild for the second season. They did a definite rebuild of the City to make it look better. We ended up using elements of that City in an Aerosmith video called "Angel" that I built a small portion of street for. Then we put a photograph of Steven Tyler in there and we did a match-move motion control, so he basically looked like he was standing in the street, singing. Then he froze, and we did the motion control move-out and see the City beyond. We also used some elements from it in a Scorpions rock video we did.

So you've really worked in all fields, not just science fiction.

Very much so. I mean, you have to keep a certain amount of flexibility. A lot of us say there's an awful lot more science fiction going on here than in England — I mean, I think they've even stopped RED DWARF now. At one point Universal was going to do it, y'know. Universal actually geared up and built sets. I'm not sure even if they shot some of it. It's very possible they did, but then they dumped on it, and they ended up selling all their sets to SPACE RANGERS.

As I understand it, they filmed two versions of the pilot. In one version, the Cat was played by Terry Farrell, who's now Dax on DEEP SPACE NINE.

Oh really? They got a woman to play the Cat? [Laughs] I dunno, it just loses its impact for me there. And how do you deal with a Liverpudlian? I mean, I can't see an American writer coming up with "Smoke me a kipper, I'll be back for breakfast." Or "smeggy." I don't think "smeggy" would come into it at all.

On BABYLON 5, who decided on computer-generated effects instead of conventional models?

That's difficult to say, because it was a hard sell. The way in which I convinced them to do it — because the producers have final decision, obviously — was that they were very, very concerned about the fact that for a low budget, how could you do high-quality effects? They've seen what's happened in terms of the money for STAR TREK and everything else, and they just didn't want to get into the situation — they couldn't. They didn't wand to end up with rubber band and string wire-type effects. So they wanted something that looked really good. I did a whole sequence of effects to try and show the scale of what the station might look like, the sort of things you can do with computer-generated imagery that you can't do with models, like flying in from miles away from the station to right up to the docking bay in one shot. That basically proved to them that it was possible to do it.

Did they decide on computer-generated imagery because it would be less expensive than real models?

It's not a case of it being less expensive. It's a case of them getting more for their money. I mean, we basically cost about a quarter of the DS9 pilot, but we just had so many things going on. Every ship could do something. There were always multiples of things in the shots and we just tried to make them as high-quality as possible.

I thought that the Vorlon ships were especially impressive.

Thank you. Yeah, that was a brainstorm. I wanted to get something that looked very alien. When people write in a script, "We want it alien and organic-looking," everybody immediately thinks H.R. Giger (*Alien*) — all that weird, bony, organic nastiness. But his stuff is always very dark and kind of evil. I didn't want to it look Giger at all. I wanted it to look quite beautiful, like something just really extraordinary and mysterious, 'cos the whole idea of the Vorlon himself is that he is very mysterious. You don't know what he is, and you won't know for a while.

The actual inspiration for that ship is pretty off-the-wall, and it's an amusing story. I would frequently visit two programmer friends of mine who live near San Francisco, and my mind was racing as we headed back home. And then we drove through this quaint little village called Gilroy, which posts itself as being "The Garlic Capital of the World." I mean, the place just smells like spaghetti sauce when you drive through it. It's really cool. Suddenly I thought, "Hmm, garlic." When we got to the hotel halfway down, I started sketching out ideas based on garlic. And so by the time I'd got together garlic and artichoke, I pretty much had it. A little bit of squid, little bit of garlic, bit of artichoke — I think you've got a pretty nice meal there — from then onwards, it's like, O.K., BABYLON 5 is based on food! [Laughs] You wanted weird stories...

Did you do any other work on BABYLON 5 besides the graphics?

Yes, and no. We did subcontract to do it, but unfortunately there was a lack of design there. I'm not particularly proud of it. We did quite a few of the props; they're all being redone.

Some people have described BABYLON 5's graphics as revolutionary. Why?

Up until now, most of the times when computer graphics have been used, they've been used by computer people, and they've been very self-conscious about it. Y'know, just because you can move all the cameras all over the place and do a continuous shot, they do. My philosophy is, treat it just like you're shooting a shot, and then it'll look better. So each of the shots of done in their own right, just the same way as you would do an effects shot for a show. We based the whole production facility here on just doing exactly the same as you would do in a real miniature and motion control environment, except for the fact that we're doing it on computer.

The models have a great attention in terms of their paint jobs and the dirtying down and aging — making sure they look a little worn. The overall look of the show I really wanted to make it colourful, because I was always very fascinated by things like DAN DARE and THUNDERBIRDS. It seems so weird that

everybody over here has always just done gray spaceships! I wanted to get a bit of colour into it, but at the same time for it to look cool. As for an explanation as to why nobody else has done it before, I've got no idea. Maybe the fact that my background isn't in computers; my background is as a model maker and effects designer, and that's a bit of a first, I think.

Is it true that you appear in BABYLON 5 a few times?

Yeah. I'm a tramp barbecuing lizards in the not-too-wonderful quarter of BABYLON 5. I was also the first person you see in the Changeling Net computer sequence. That was because they wanted somebody who looked like a thug, and I was the closest thing that was standing around.

Do you ever see the Video Toaster coming to England?

Not in its present form. Unfortunately, it's because of the way NTSC works that the Toaster is able to do what it does. Now LightWave, the actual modeling and rendering program, it's very possible for that to go to England with very small modifications, and it's just up to New Tek. Europe is the biggest software piracy crime zone in the world, so what developers have a tendency to do is copy-protecting their programs with what's known as a dongle, which is a thing that you plug into the back of your computer and the program won't work without that piece of hardware. If you lose it, you have to buy the software again. It basically stops people from copying software, because after all, they've spent millions of dollars developing it, so they deserve to get their money back. They would have to come up with a dongle-based system to run in England, but I'm sure they could. It's just that the Video Toaster's main market is the people doing fun kind of effects, like live, real-time cross-dissolves, fades, warp effects, and things like that. And that is impossible for PAL.

Back when you were at the BBC, they must have just started using Quantel.

Yes. In fact, TRIPODS was the first show to use Quantel Paintbox.

That must seem so long ago...

Yeah, tell me! [Laughs]

Do you ever regret leaving England?

Oh, all the time, all the time. But, y'know, I wouldn't have ever done what I've done to date back in England. It just doesn't work that way. John Stears, who is our Floor Effects Supervisor of BABYLON 5, has left England. And he's just one of the — I hate to call him the great-granddaddy of visual effects, but he really is. I mean, he's the sweetest man you'll ever meet, and he did the floor effects for *Star Wars*, every James Bond movie up to *The Man With the Golden Gun*, *Outland*... This guy has done so many movies, it's not true! Some of them are movies Paul and I know from when we were children, like the story of Douglas Bader — which is *Reach for the Sky* — and when John told us that he'd worked on that, it was just like, from then on he's been known as Saint John, he can do no wrong! But I mean, even he's left England. He's got Academy Awards up the wazoo, and there's just no work there for him. He's had to sell his house and everything.

If you could work with anybody, who would that be?

Boy, it's really difficult to say. That's a really difficult question, 'cos it's like turning around to someone and saying, "What's you favourite movie?" For certain reasons, *The Hunt for Red October* is my favourite movie. For certain other reasons, *Blade Runner*'s my favourite movie. Then again, so's *2001*, so it's really, really difficult to pin down.

[Thinks for a moment] Directors that I admire and I love their work... Ridley Scott. In a different way, John McTiernan. Definitely Gerry Anderson. I'd love to do something like a Gerry Anderson show in computer graphics. I think that would be great fun! Or something like DAN DARE.

What plans do you have for the future?

Well, we're working at the moment for Paramount on a show called VIPER, which is a car show that's coming out in the fall. We're also, obviously, getting involved with the BABYLON 5 series (shhh); that's been given the definite green light. Myself, Steve Burg, and Phil Norwood are trying to work on an entirely computer-generated kid's show, which would be very sci-fi and in the same sort of vein as THUNDERBIRDS. Phil Norwood's an incredible storyboard artist who storyboarded all of *The Abyss* and most of *Terminator 2*. Steve Burg designed all of the alien stuff in *The Abyss* and how the "liquid man" would work in *Terminator 2*. He's an incredible designer. He also designed all of the aliens for BABYLON 5, all the central characters like Kosh and G'Kar.

So you're getting quite busy, then.

Hopefully. It's nice to be able to create a new market, where the market in terms of science fiction stuff has become so depressed recently, because of the incredible expense of it all. It's nice that we're now in a position to be able to allow people to do it again. I really think we're going to have an overall impact. As a result of all the R&D we did, Steven Spielberg's company is now able to do the effects for SEAQUEST DSV, using the same basic technology.

Ron Thornton, thank you very much!

"There is a hole in your teleplay"

The "missing bits" of the BABYLON 5 pilot

BETWEEN the stages of filming and editing, BABYLON 5's pilot, *The Gathering*, lost approximately 20 minutes of footage in much the same way that its Commander, Jeffrey Sinclair, can't account for 24 hours of his life during the Earth/Minbari War. While nothing of extreme importance was deleted from the pilot, the excised scenes expanded upon the characters, gave more detailed explanations of certain situations, and generally established BABYLON 5 as a more credible environment.

The script for *The Gathering* begins much differently than the televised version; instead of a series of images narrated by Ambassador Londo Mollari of the Centauri Republic, it shows a slice of everyday life aboard this station "deep within neutral space." During this initial scene, Security Chief Garibaldi is looking for Commander Sinclair because "someone down in Bay 12 needs his personal clearance to come aboard." Lieutenant Commander Laurel Takashima responds that Sinclair is on his way; "[He] had to take care of a 'tourist' problem first." That problem turns out to be a transaction between a human male and a female alien prostitute with "vaguely chitinous" skin. After disrupting the negotiation, Sinclair admonishes the alien: "You know the rules about crossing species. Stick with the list." When the human "john" complains, Sinclair retorts, "Obviously you've never met an Arnassian before. After they finish, they eat their mate."

Commander Sinclair then proceeds to Customs, where he greets telepath Lyta Alexander. While they exchange pleasantries, Garibaldi's sensors detect that somebody is smuggling Dust (a glittering, highly addictive drug of the 23rd century). When approached, the Dust smuggler panics, pulls out a PPG (Phased-Plasma Gun, the standard weapon on BABYLON 5), and takes the woman closest to him as a hostage. The teaser ends on his threat to kill her. Sinclair then displays his diplomatic nature by negotiating with the Dust-dealer: "Let her go and I'll guarantee you safe passage off the station... Try and take her out of here, and [five marksmen]'ll burn you to the ground. It's your choice." The Dust-dealer surrenders; Sinclair confiscates and incinerates the Dust, warning the smuggler that "we've logged your ship's ID. If you ever come within 50 klicks of this station again, we'll blow you out of the sky."

After this point, we have Ambassador G'Kar confronting Lt. Cmdr. Takashima, and Sinclair and Lyta strolling through Babylon 5's alien sector. Once mystery man Del Varner arrives on the station, the action shifts the senior officers' ready room. In this expanded scene, Dr. Benjamin Kyle apologizes for his tardiness, saying he was tied up in Medlab with a Minbari birth. Kyle then says, "I have to send that new nurse back to Earth Central. Granted, she's sharp — most xenobiologists are all theory, not nearly enough practice to make them worth a damn in the operating room — but she refused to assist with the Minbari pregnancy. Wouldn't even touch the patient." He then explains how she lost "her only family — two brothers" in the Earth/Minbari War.

Perhaps most interestingly, when the Minbari Ambassador is mentioned in this conversation, Delenn is referred to as "he," not "she." Originally Delenn was written as a male character, played by a woman to highlight his alienness. And much like Judith Paris' Eldrad in DOCTOR WHO's *The Hand of Fear*, actress Mira Furlan's voice was to be electronically altered and deepened. However, this effect proved so unconvincing that the producers of BABYLON 5 opted to change Delenn's gender instead.

From here to the point where Vorlon Ambassador Kosh is attacked, the script and the televised pilot correspond. A few deleted lines concerning the Vorlons make them sound even more of a menacing mystery, though. While awaiting Kosh's arrival, it is mentioned that "to date, three expeditions have been sent into Vorlon space to establish formal relations. None of them came back." And while Sinclair corresponds with the Earth Senator via view-screen about Kosh's condition, the Senator explains that it "seems their world has a history of biological warfare going back 500 years. Almost wiped them out," which helps explain why the Vorlons are so suspicious about Kosh's sudden collapse after his arrival.

Also, when Lt. Cmdr. Takashima and Dr. Kyle discuss their mysterious plan for determining Kosh's attacker, the script expands on their persuading telepath Lyta Alexander to help them. Lyta is understandably reluctant — after all, she could be drummed out of the psi corps for an unauthorized mind scan — and here she safeguards herself a bit further. "If I do this... *If* I do... What are the odds he'll remember the contact?" she asks Kyle.

"He's so far out of it, I don't *think* he'll have any memory of your scan," Kyle replies.

"But you're not sure."

"No."

Almost imperceptibly, Lyta nods her agreement.

On a related note, Sinclair's "trial" seems to have more meaning to the characters in *The Gathering*'s script. True, they make their protests before and during, but in the teleplay it comes across as perfunctory and very similar to the Klingon kangaroo court of *Star Trek VI: The Undiscovered Country*. In a cut scene, after Sinclair is due to be shipped off to the Vorlon homeworld for trial, his girlfriend Carolyn Sykes angrily confronts Delenn: "My God, you didn't even vote in his favour at the council meeting. You *abstained!*"

"I did not have all the facts," Delenn protests. "I still lack some of the—"

"—What you lack is a conscience!" counters Carolyn. "I thought Jeff was your friend! After all he's done here, for you, for the station, the one time he needed you ..you just walked away."

Although stung by this, Delenn replies, "I'm sorry. I can do nothing else. I have my orders. On the

matter of Commander Sinclair, I am here strictly to observe." (Delenn doesn't say what he's observing, or why, however.)

This exchange shows a great deal about both Carolyn and Delenn's characters: Carolyn's love for Sinclair, as well as her confusion at Delenn's apparent betrayal; and Delenn's actions (or lack thereof) heighten the mystery to the already enigmatic Minbari Federation. Another later cut scene shows a deeply frustrated Delenn anguishing over his orders.

As the above sequence shows, Carolyn Sykes plays vastly different roles in the scripted and the televised versions of *The Gathering*. In the script, she does a great deal more than lay seductively beneath her "totally frictionless" Carnelian bedsheets and act as a shoulder for Sinclair to cry on; she comes across as an intelligent, assertive woman, independent yet dedicated to the man she loves. In an earlier cut scene, she's shopping in the bazaar when she encounters Ambassador Delenn. During their conversation, she thanks Delenn for helping Sinclair and says, "I realize you've only known each other for less than a year, but your help, your friendship, mean a lot to him." This helps heighten the later tension between these characters in the above-mentioned confrontation.

After confronting Delenn, Carolyn returns to Sinclair's quarters in time to nearly get hit by The Line medallion he hurls across the room in frustration. In this greatly expanded scene, he confronts his feelings about being deported. "You were right, Carolyn. Give me a ship, turn me loose with nobody at risk but myself, that's fine. If I get in trouble, I'll stay and fight it out. But here... I can't... Because I'm supposed to represent Earth."

"Jeff, every man, woman, and alien on this station trusts you," Carolyn replies. "But you don't trust yourself. You wear that Commander's badge like you're afraid you'll break it. Okay, yes, you're supposed to speak for Earth, you're supposed to be polite and diplomatic, but that doesn't mean letting them crucify you."

"Carolyn, this could turn deadly. I have to protect my crew—"

"Your crew know the risks. No one came here with any illusions," Carolyn points out. "Not one of them wants you to go down without a fight for their sake. They need *you. Here.*" She picks up the medallion. "If you want to throw something, throw it at those bastards at Earth Central who threw you to the wolves..." She trails off as she realizes the medallion's significance, and the conversation continues as televised, with Sinclair admitting the guilt he feels about surviving a battle that so many people died in. "My whole team was wiped out. I can't let that happen again."

"Is that what this is about, Jeff?" asks Carolyn. "Are you going along with this out of guilt? Because you think history is repeating itself?"

"Carolyn, I have a responsibility—"

"—to lead. Your team chose to go on The Line with you. And we chose to come here with you. And if you want to stay and fight this, we're *with* you. Just do what you think is *right*."

Inspired by this, Sinclair grabs a PPG and goes "to get some answers."

Just before Sinclair and Garibaldi parade through Command Central with their flak vests and big guns, a cut scene in Delenn's quarters would have shown a confrontation between Londo Mollari and Delenn. Delenn faces his ring cabinet as Londo enters. "You wanted to see me?" Londo asks.

Delenn turns, wearing a different-coloured ring than the one he used earlier on G'Kar. "Yes," Delenn replies. "I want to know why you voted as you did at the council meeting. And you are going to tell me. And you are not going to lie to me." The ring glows brighter..

After Sinclair's battle with the Minbari warrior, and the announcement that Ambassador Kosh is out of danger, the Medlab scene continues further. Laurel Takashima asks Kyle, "So, Doctor... Just what *did* you see when you looked inside that suit?"

After a long pause, Kyle replies. "There are moments in your life when everything crystallizes. When the whole world reshapes itself, right down to its component molecules, and everything changes. I've looked upon the face of a Vorlon, Laurel.. and nothing's the same anymore."

Once everything has been successfully resolved, Sinclair in the script *does* plant a nanotechnological sensor in G'Kar's drink, as opposed to the televised version, where it became apparent that a bluff would work better (and inflict *much* more pain and humiliation upon G'Kar...).

After that, the scene shifts to the conference room, where Kosh is making his way towards Lyta Alexander and Dr. Kyle. "What if he remembers what I did?" she asks nervously.

"Lyta, the odds are one in a billion," Kyle reassures her. "He won't remember. It'll be okay." Kyle introduces Lyta to Kosh, who exhibits no reaction at first. "Then slowly, Kosh raises one clawed hand. He folds down his fingers until only the index finger remains. Then, shaking his head, he waggles his finger at her in a gesture of 'naughty, naughty.' *He remembers.*"

Lyta gives Dr. Kyle a look. "One in a billion, huh?"

"Math never was my strongest area..." Kyle says sheepishly.

* * * * *

Ultimately, the script to *The Gathering* reads better than its televised counterpart. Many of the incidental scenes cut from the pilot would have given viewers a better understanding of the characters' relationships, and a more in-depth background to the alien ambassadors. For example, the scripted "coffee" scene establishes the informal camaraderie shared by people who have served together for a long time; this does not come across as strongly in the televised version, perhaps due to the actors involved. Many people have called Michael O'Hare's Commander Sinclair wooden, but he has nothing on Tamlyn Tomita's Lt. Cmdr. Takashima when it comes to being impassive! Perhaps this is one reason why both she and Johnny Sekka's Dr. Kyle were both replaced due to a desire for "a better team ensemble" (as mentioned in a recent issue of *Cinefantastique*).

The Gathering did benefit by having some scenes cut, though. For example, when Garibaldi is dejectedly nursing a drink in the casino, there was to have been a lengthy sequence that basically boiled down to a "I'll have what the gentleman on the floor is having" joke before Londo came to offer his apologies on the way he voted. While a cute idea, this might have partially undermined the pilot's credibility. Other, more cleverly humorous scenes, such as the above with Lyta, Kosh, and Kyle would have been both more welcome and appropriate. While not the world's most innovative science fiction pilot, *The Gathering* effectively accomplishes its goals of establishing Babylon 5 and its environs as a credible universe, introducing its main and supporting cast; and above all, telling a solid, coherent story.

***Author's Note:** All quoted excerpts within this article are © 1992 Rattlesnake Productions, with all rights reserved. They have been presented here to present a more complete picture both of* Babylon 5*'s origins and what might have been.*

John S Hall

Station Manifest, Babylon 5—2257 A.D.

IT HAS been a year since "The Gathering" of five alien governments aboard Babylon 5, and much has changed. Creator J. Michael Straczynski has promised quite a lot of his new series, and according to early reports, he's making good on that promise.

Gone are the rented sets, along with most of the pilot cast; aside from all the alien ambassadors, only Commander Sinclair (Michael O'Hare) and Security Chief Garibaldi (Jerry Doyle) remain. Lieutenant Commander Laurel Takashima has been "reassigned to a classified mission" (Straczynski might bring her back eventually); her successor is Susan Ivanova (Claudia Christian), a blonde woman "of Russian descent, with a commanding presence...quirky and somewhat pessimistic." Dr. Benjamin Kyle (Johnny Sekka), the station's resident xenobiologist, is "now assisting the Earth Alliance president on the issue of alien migration to Earth." He has been replaced by Stephen Franklin (Richard Briggs), a "dedicated and self-assured" doctor whose "background in experimental medicine does not leave him with a good bedside manner."

Telepath Lyta Alexander (Patricia Tallman) has since been reassigned; taking her place is Talia Winters, played by Andrea Thompson. And apparently Carolyn Sykes (Blaire Baron) decided not to wait for Sinclair, since she's out of the picture as well. Sinclair's new love interest, Catherine Sakai (Julia Nickson), "works for an Earth company that surveys asteroids and planets for mineral exploitation." Many of these characters will not be introduced until the second or third televised episodes of Babylon 5 — and some even later than that!

Three of the alien ambassadors will now have assistants in recurring roles. Lennier, subordinate to Delenn (Mira Furlan) is played by Billy (Lost In Space) Mumy. Since Lennier has a monastic background, he promises to be a "true innocent." Keeping G'Kar's attaches proved to be more difficult, however. Originally actress Mary Woronov portrayed Ko'Dath in one episode, but was quickly written out when she could not handle the prosthetic Narn makeup, and replaced by Caitlin Brown as Na'Toth. All that's known about the assistant to Londo Mollari (Peter Jurasik) is his name, Vir Cotto (Stephen Furst).

At the end of January, the first of 22 episodes will begin airing across the U.S. Some have been filmed out of sequence due to the great amount of computer-generated special effects required (such as one episode which recaps The Line much in the same way that Deep Space Nine's *The Emissary* recounted the Borg massacre at Wolf 359). The award-winning [illegible] even further, and the sets made to look more "in synch" with Babylon 5's immaculate exteriors.

Fans of telefantasy will have many favourite actors to watch for during Babylon 5's first season. Although felled by a heart attack in 1993, Walter Chekov) Koenig *will* appear in the series, although not as the villain character originally planned. Instead, he will play a "psi-cop" in at least one episode, while the recurring villainous Knight One is essayed by Christopher Neame (*Shada*'s Skagra). David McCallum, star of The Man From U.N.C.L.E. and Sapphire And Steel, guest stars in the first televised episode, while the second story highlights W. Morgan Sheppard (Ira Graves from The Next Generation's *The Schizoid Man*). Danica McKeller, Winnie from The Wonder Years, appears as a young Centauri woman in one episode, and Judson Scott (*Star Trek II: The Wrath of Khan*) will play another Knight character. Finally, David Warner (*Star Trek V* and *VI: Chain of Command I* and *II*) will appear in an episode dealing with someone's quest for the Holy Grail.

Michael Straczynski has also assembled some of the top writers in US telefantasy, such as Harlan Ellison, D.C. Fontana, and David Gerrold, to write scripts for his series, and these promise to be quite unlike any of their Star Trek efforts. In all, it looks like a very promising start, and Straczynski still holds by his motto of "no cute kids, no cute robots — ever!". Babylon 5 is now well and truly "open for business."

John S Hall

MAKING A SILK PURSE FROM A SOW'S EAR...

CAPTAIN POWER AND THE SOLDIERS OF THE FUTURE should have been a disaster. The work of writers and FX staff who have gone on to create BABYLON 5 ensured that it wasn't...

CAPTAIN POWER could not, in all honesty, be called the best known telefantasy series around. But you've probably heard of it — or rather, of the controversy when it was made. The BBC and ITV tried to decide whether they would buy this "latest example of crass American commercialism", as seen on CLIVE JAMES ON TELEVISION, James putting on his best sneer as the toy spaceship in his hands blows apart. Because CAPTAIN POWER is that infamous 'play along with the telly' series. It's also a prime example of how a dedicated team of writers and directors can salvage an appalling concept, turning a sow's ear into a silk purse.

The origins: As its full title suggests, CAPTAIN POWER AND THE SOLDIERS OF THE FUTURE was, like HE MAN AND THE MASTERS OF THE UNIVERSE, backed by a toy company and was intended as a vehicle to sell a range of toys and action figures. The characters were to be stereotypes, the heroes known by superhero identities such as 'Hawk' and 'Scout', the villains one-dimensional machine creatures such as 'Lord Dread'. The plots were to be simple tales of the villains plotting to trap the heroes, and the heroes escaping thanks to the superhuman abilities they gained from their 'power-suits'. But to boost this uninspired concept, a few gimmicks were to be attached.

Firstly, the series was to be interactive: attached to the front panels of Dread's mechanical soldiers would be a glowing panel to which a hand-held gun (shaped in the form of the various aircraft featured in the series) could respond during battle sequences. The viewer at home could play along, as the gun registered hits on the Bio-Dreads, and kept track of their 'attacks' on the player. Get hit too many times, and your action figure would get ejected from his cockpit — win, and you got a fairly wimpy victory chime! In the long term, however, this gimmick was to prove commercially disastrous, as a number of broadcasting companies, the BBC and ITV included, refused to purchase the series, believing that viewers would find it impossible to enjoy it without purchasing the 'guns'. That was certainly Mattel's intention, as they promised at least three minutes of battle sequences each episode. But this proved not to be the case.. as the second gimmick resulted in the appointment of a production team too interested in producing a quality show to let a three minute 'dead weight' clog up their episodes.

The second 'gimmick' was that CAPTAIN POWER was to be a live action series. One produced on a shoestring, admittedly, but a live action series nonetheless. As a result it attracted writers and directors that an animated show would not — enthusiasts determined to show what they could do on a small budget by producing a science fiction show which appealed to both children and adults. As such, it's perhaps the closest America has ever come to producing an equivalent of DOCTOR WHO, a comparison confirmed when a member of the production staff was asked which established SF series they most wished to emulate with POWER.

The basic scenario behind CAPTAIN POWER would not be out of place as the basis for a DOCTOR WHO story. As explained in the two-part flashback episode *A Summoning of Thunder*, by the twenty second century human soldiers have been replaced by machines, controlled by central computers. In an attempt to bring forced disarmament Professor Stuart Power and his colleague Lyman Taggert developed a central computer, Overmind, capable of taking control of both sides. But Taggert was also paranoid about growing old, and hoped to achieve immortality through the transfer of human minds into mechanical bodies. Linking his brain to Overmind, he brought the computer to consciousness and in turn became influenced by it, believing in the 'perfection of the machine'. Intending to forcibly establish similar links between Overmind and the rest of humanity, they took control of the robot soldiers across the globe and turned them against mankind in what became known as the metal wars.

By 2147 and the time of the series these events are decades in the past. Humanity has lost, and the surviving humans are mostly refugees, with a few ragged resistance bands fighting a final battle against the machines.

Landmark Entertainment Group

Taggert, by now a cyborg known as Lord Dread, commands a vast empire based in the fortress of Volcania. Integral to which are the Dread Youth, a 'Hitler Youth' (seen at Nuremberg-style rallies in some episodes) indoctrinated from childhood to share Dread's belief in the superiority of the machine, and to long for immortality as a Bio-Dread. Commanding these forces, and the tin-can robots, are human Over-Units (including a few regular villains), and the Bio-Dreads — computer generated creatures which roam the land 'digitising' humans for storage as data which can eventually be transferred into android bodies.

Perhaps the only effective opposition to Lord Dread comes from a group led by Power's son Jonathan, who have the advantage of Stuart Power's last creation — the power suits, which allow the wearer to battle the robots on equal terms. However, the suits have a limited power supply when away from the 'Powerbase', and are prone to auto-shutdown when nearing exhaustion (a factor presumably introduced so as to undermine the restricting 'superhero' premise), and are limited in number — only half a dozen or so were produced, and as each suit must be personalised to a particular wearer, several are still in storage until such time as a suitable recruit to the group appears (*The Intruder* concerns a hopeful's attempts to convince Power that he would be a suitable addition to the group). Operating out of a base whose location Dread continually seeks, Power's group travel in an adapted XT7 Powerjet which is projected across the country through a hyper-space jump-system.

As the series title suggests, Power's group are known as the *Soldiers of the Future*, but this phrase was used only when the writers couldn't possibly avoid it. Just as the special effects staff did wonders on a limited budget, on one infamous occasion improvising a highly effective set over lunch from material found on the studio rubbish dump, the writers would undercut and subvert all the weaknesses inherent in the series format. Their attitude towards all the superhero trappings forced upon them can, perhaps, be inferred from an exchange in the episode *Freedom One*. Just as STAR COPS justified its cliched title by explaining that this was an unflattering nickname for the JSPF, so 'pirate' radio broadcaster Freedom One (played by Gwyneth Walsh, later a Duras sister in STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION) introduces herself as Christine Laraby and asks Power his name.

"Jonathan Power," he replies.

"You're kidding! Power! I thought that was some kind of silly code name, like Freedom One!"

Of course, some aspects to the series couldn't be subverted in this manner. The Bio-Dreads Soaron and Blastarr remained largely true to stereotype, though references were occasionally made to the humans existing within them, and on whose memories they, like Data, could call), and similarly, each member of Power's group was known generally by their title. Aside from the Captain himself, the other soldiers were: Matthew 'Hawk' Masterson, a former officer of the US military who'd originally headed the military side of Stuart Power's research group in the early days of the war, and whose suit allowed him to fly; Michael 'Tank' Ellis, a genetically engineered soldier, whose suit's capabilities should be obvious; Robert 'Scout' Baker, the 'token' black, whose suit was capable of holographic disguise; and Jennifer 'Pilot' Chase, pilot of the group's XT7 powerjet. The latter was to prove perhaps the most interesting character over the course of the first season, as a number of episodes explained her background as a member of the Dread youth, brought round by Power. In *Gemini and Counting* she is confronted by an 'image' of her former self, as she debates a Dread Youth after infiltrating one of their facilities, and in *Judgement* she and Power seek refuge at a settlement where, years before, she assisted in an atrocity.

A similarly, and unexpectedly, hard-edged approach is seen in many other episodes, winning the series criticism from the American equivalents of Mary Whitehouse: *The Abyss* is surprisingly sceptical towards the US military, featuring a surviving force of US military personnel based in an underground survival shelter, who threaten Power's group. Continuity between episodes is strong: whereas

BLAKE's 7 never mentioned resistance leaders such as Avalon again after their one appearance, the Soldiers frequently receive messages from established colleagues, or follow up leads established in earlier episodes. The most prominent example of this is Dread's Project New Order, which story editor Larry Ditellio later admitted came to dominate season one rather more than they'd originally intended, squeezing out other elements, among them the Eden Two sanctuary, potential Soldier Andy Jackson and the technological bartertown Tec City, to whose development they were to have returned in season two.

Throughout the season, the Soldiers attempt to discover more about Project New Order and its constituent parts, amongst them Icarus, Prometheus and Charon. Charon is the first of these to come to fruition, with the creation of Blastarr, the tank-like second of the Bio-Dreads in *The Ferryman* (the jealousy between Blastarr and his air-borne predecessor Soaron forming a running plot throughout the rest of the season). Sabotage by Power's group ensures that Blastarr remains unique, though a miniature version, named Lackey, also emerges to serve as Dread's aide. But in a move which typifies the series' subversive approach it slowly emerges that this nauseating 7-Zark-7 like creature has a darker purpose — as a spy for Overmind, which is becoming increasingly concerned that Dread's human-side might still have influence on his actions. And with good reason, as the events of *Flame Street*, in which Power is rescued from a Cyberspace confrontation with Dread by Lyman Taggert himself, shows.

This proves to be a running thread throughout the season, surfacing when Dread seeks the co-operation of an old flame in the design of the perfected Bio-Dreads in *A Fire in the Dark*, and most notably in *A Summoning of Thunder*. The framing plot for this two-parter describes how Power visits his father's grave each year. As Dread closes in to ambush him, both recall the events of 2132, as the war reached the end of its first phase.

In those days US society was still intact, and Stuart Power, alongside Matt Masterson, headed a research group answering directly to the President trying to 'even the war'. But as the Power-suits near completion, Power's teenage son Jonathan is captured by Taggert, who uses him as a lever to try and force his former colleague to defect to his side. With the Powers held prisoner, Masterson activates the Powerbase and its master computer, Mentor (which uses the voice and image of Stuart Power), and risks premature use of a powersuit in an attempt to save the day. As the war takes a decidedly ugly turn through Taggert's creation of the bio-dread Soaron, events come to a head, and in the ensuing battle Stuart Power is killed, Taggert wounded and forced to seek survival in a 'dreadful' cyborg body (leading him to adopt the name Lord Dread), and the course of the war decided once and for all... While in the framing plot, Dread neglects to engage a booster which would have allowed him to reach the grave before Power's departure (an omission carefully noted by Lackey, instead leaving on the grave a music box which was a birthday gift from the Powers years before, and whose inscription refers to Taggert's ill-fated fear of ageing — "You're not getting any older, you're getting... well, older!" Corny it may sound, but it's done with a skill and delicacy that is immensely touching. This and the other two parters are easily the most effective episodes, and the second season was to have included more of them. The first season, however, features only *A Summoning of Thunder* and the two which close the season.

The first season ends in fact with an effective four parter, as Project New Order finally comes to a head. In *New Order*, Dread plans to use a space-borne digitizer, the Icarus Platform, to capture whole populations from orbit, while Prometheus will ignite a simultaneous series of surface plasma explosions which will devastate the few remaining human controlled areas. By the end of episode one, one threat has been eliminated, with Icarus knocked out of orbit, and falling towards Volcania itself, but Prometheus remains active, with only seventeen minutes left in which the Soldiers can avert it, by attacking Volcania itself — a suicidal suggestion Scout greets with the words "Beam me up, Scotty, there's no intelligent life here."

Disaster is averted, of course, on both sides, but *Retribution* sees the thwarted Dread pressing home a merciless attack on the remaining human settlements, no longer bothered about digitising his enemies. A rescue mission by Power's group results in Soaron witnessing the Powerjet's hyperjump, confirming Dread's suspicion (which had built throughout the season - another running plot) that the Soldiers must have developed some form of teleport in order to travel so widely, and providing him with the frequency data needed to track the jump's exit and entry points — and hence locate the Powerbase. The Powerjet is ambushed and shot down, leaving the 'base and its inhabitants undefended as Blastarr attacks.

The season cliffhanger is on a par with any BLAKE's 7 ever produced, with the base destroyed (in a small, but perfect, touch, souvenirs of previous episodes including a plaque, acquired in *And Make No War No More* & inscribed with that self-same quotation, are seen to be consumed by Blastarr's fire), and five of the regular characters meeting their end. True, most of these are villains or electronic characters, and in some cases resurrection is possible (a back-up copy of the Mentor programmes, for instance, having been got out of the base before its end), but there are deaths among the Soldiers themselves, losses made more effective by the near resolution of several character sub-plots earlier in the episode.

Also resolved is the developing conflict between Dread and Overmind. Midway through the episode Dread takes the opportunity to eliminate Overmind's spy, Lackey, but by then it is too late for him — with Power's threat apparently destroyed, Overmind obliges Dread to undergo recreation, a recreation which will finally destroy the last remnants of Lyman Taggert. Dread is led to his 'death' by two of his own troopers, actor David Hemblin investing him with a martyred dignity which makes this villain's end genuinely touching.

Season two would have seen the series become even grittier — with the Power Base destroyed, the surviving members of Power's group would find themselves on the run, not daring to make frequent use of their Power suits for lack of opportunities to recharge them. Alongside this further dilution of the series' initial 'superhero' concept would have come a hardening of the characters. In particular, Captain Power himself was to have become embittered by guilt over the events of *Retribution* (a development foreshadowed by the final shot of season one, a close up of his haunted face), abandoning his previous dedication to the preservation of all life in favour of revenge, at any price, on Dread. With the Captain's departure from the thankless role of 'perfect hero', Colonel Masterson was to have become the group's effective leader, while the largely neglected supporting characters were to have taken centre-stage, assuming the roles of 'traditional' hero. Another female character was to have joined the Soldiers — Ranger, a hardened veteran of the ground war, whose approach to battle was to be much more pragmatic than her colleagues, while changes among the villains were also to have occurred.

Most obvious would have been the transformation of Lord Dread, reborn in an entirely mechanical body and stripped of the last remnants of his humanity. Supporting him was to have been a female android Morgana II, also housing a former human consciousness, and a new breed of more deadly ground troops replacing the 'tin-can' robots. With Overmind more obviously in control this season, Dread's own objectives were to have hardened, in favour of total extermination of the remaining humans. And finally, the season was to have revealed a hidden agenda on Overmind's part, one which, by the season's end, was to have caused Soaron to part company with Dread, defecting to Power's group in time for the third season — a third season in which the Soldiers would finally have been able to strike back against Dread.

But it wasn't to be: by mid-season, the production staff had abandoned any pretence at maintaining the series' role as a product plug, omitting the play-along battle sequences unless they actually made sense within the plot, and Mattel, increasingly unhappy that the show was heading away from the merchandising platform they'd designed (particularly through the destruction of several heavily merchandised pieces of hardware in the season cliffhanger), withdrew finance. Spotting the way things were heading, Ditellio ensured that season two's writers delivered their scripts, thereby ensuring full payment, before the axe fell. Plans for a relaunch, based either on these scripts or a separate movie script, floundered on the vexed question of the rights to season one, which would have been essential to any sales package.

So, there it ended. There are eighteen second season scripts in existence, but it's unlikely they'll ever be produced. The series was taken off just as it seemed likely to confirm an unanswerable claim in telefantasy's hall of greats. Instead, the first season must suffice, as a hint of what might have been. It's difficult to find in Britain, but a rental tape of five episodes (*Shattered*, *Pariah*, *The Mirror in Darkness*, *A Fire in the Dark* and *The Ferryman*) was issued, while the series has been screened on the now defunct Lifestyle satellite station. US viewers can obtain a wider selection of episodes, along with animated game tapes. It may not be telefantasy's finest hour, but it's well worth seeing, particularly if you can catch any of the two-parters. By any standards its not bad.. not bad at all, and considering what it might have been, it's quite superb.

Anthony Brown

Captain Power...

	Writer	Director
Shattered	Larry Ditellio	Mario Azzopardi
Wardogs	Larry Ditellio	George Mendelak
Abyss	J Michael Straczynski	Mario Azzopardi
Final Stand	J Michael Straczynski	Doug Williams
Pariah	Marc Scott Zicree	Otta Hanus
The Mirror in Darkness	Marc Scott Zicree & J Michael Sractzynski	Otta Hanus
The Ferryman	J Michael Straczynski	Otta Hanus
Gemini and Counting	Story: Christy Marx Teleplay: J Michael Straczynsk	Otta Hanus
And Study War No More	Michael Reaves	Jorge Montezi
The Intruder	Teleplay. J Michael Straczynski Story: J Michael Straczynski & Marc Scott Zicree	Ken Girotti
And Madness Shall Reign	Larry Ditellio	Jorge Montezi
Judgement	Larry Ditellio	Jorge Montezi
A Summoning of Thunder - 1	J Michael Straczynski	Otta Hanus
A Summoning of Thunder - 2	J Michael Straczynski	Otta Hanus
The Eden Road	J Michael Straczynski	Ken Girotti
Freedom One	Christy Marx & J Michael Straczynski	Rihen Schenberger
Flame Street	Michael Reaves & J Michael Straczynski	Otta Hanus
A Fire in the Dark	Marv Wolfman	Doug Williams
New Order 1)And the Sky Shall Swallow Them	Larry Ditellio	Otta Hanus
2)And the Land Shall Burn	Larry Ditellio	Otta Hanus
Retribution - 1	J Michae Straczynski	Jorge Montezi
Retribution - 2	J Michae Straczynski	Jorge Montezi

NICHOLAS BRIGGS *IS* THE DOCTOR!

Ten years on, DOCTOR WHO remains alive and well, courtesy of the fan-produced Audio Visuals series...

WITHIN the first few moments of *The Time Ravagers*, the Doctor vanishes. He returns after briefly travelling unprotected through the vortex. Aged to the point of death, he regenerates flawlessly, and is in control from the moment of his inception, deftly navigating the TARDIS over a dangerous time abyss. Unfortunately, this masterly skill and confidence was not to last.

A brief segment of time first. 1984 did not see the predicted Orwellian future, but, nevertheless, an alternative future was created. Devoted fans of DOCTOR WHO, in celebration of that series, went forward in time to the Doctor's future for the production of the Audio Visuals series ADVENTURES IN SPACE AND TIME - audio plays produced by a non-profit fan organisation. They feature a full cast, original scripts, sound effects and an original score. The series has now reached the end of its fourth season and, unlike the tv original, the next season is already confirmed.

Nicholas Briggs actually makes his debut as the Doctor in the second story of the series. The pilot production *The Space Wail* is noteworthy for the experience the AV team gained from producing it, but other than that it is better to assume the series started with *The Time Ravagers*. Allowing that bit of historical rewriting, season one would then consist of five stories. These stories, much like the black and white era of DOCTOR WHO, were not as technically advanced as those of later years, but still featured some brilliant scripts such as *Conglomerate* and *The Cloud of Fear*.

AV rose far above their amateur label with seasons two and three, which consisted of six and seven stories respectively. Season four, a linked set of eight stories, highlights ground-breaking production values by any standards. Regarding the individual stories, although generally brilliant, avoid *Connection 13*, *The Trilexia Threat* and *Mythos*. Special mention for brilliance above and beyond the call of duty goes to *The Mutant Phase*, *Minuet in Hell*, *Sword of Orion*, *Deadfall* and (especially) *Endurance*. With the completion of season four at hand, Nicholas Briggs has played the role of the Doctor for 25 plays, ranging in length from 60 to 180 minutes, making his 'era' longer than Davison's, Baker's or McCoy's.

Briggs and the AV team have brought a unique perspective to the role of the Doctor. The portrayal is unlike any of his TV aspects, which after seven incarnations is quite an accomplishment of acting ability and scripting. Mathew Jones, in DWB99, states that the Doctor is played as "a cold, emotionally distanced man, quick to anger, tempered only by momentary moments of affection and humour." This description is apt for the stories Jones was reviewing, but it is not valid for Briggs' entire era. Earlier in the series the Doctor was portrayed as warm-hearted, humorous and caring. What makes this Doctor different, and in many ways easier to relate to, is that his character develops along with the series.

In the early days of his regeneration the Doctor was confident, optimistic and carried with him a glowing enthusiasm for life. Although he is exceptionally rational, his love for the unknown leads him to rely on intuition, rather than precision, while navigating the TARDIS. This is a Doctor with compassion, who cares for his friends. This is a Doctor who intercepts a message begging for decent tea and knows he's found a lifelong friend. This is a Doctor who plays with rubber duckies in the bath. In some ways this is a revisionist Doctor - he knows neutrons don't flow.

In dangerous situations he reacts with authority. In the face of an arrogant enemy, the Doctor is likely to attack with sarcasm and self-assured defiance. Even when confronting the Emperor Dalek on Skaro, he is calm and controlled, joking "Still you, is it? Hasn't there been an election yet?" He knows that, somehow, he will triumph in the end.

It is perhaps this character trait above all others that eventually led to the Doctor we see in the later stories. As the series has progressed it has become more and more dramatic and taken on a darker edge. We have seen the confident, optimistic Doctor disappear, slowly at first, to be replaced by a cold, emotionally detached and precarious Time Lord. This is a Doctor who quotes dark poetry at the death of a friend, so the pain won't reach him. A vulnerable person who has had more crushing defeats recently than any of his former selves.

It began with the Doctor's addiction to Sargol, a hallucinogenic drug. Early on in the series the addiction was forced on him by an enemy, and he managed to fight off the withdrawal symptoms for quite some time. Eventually, while his will was weakened by other factors, the addiction returned. This was the first proof to himself that he wasn't invulnerable, and that he couldn't always win. He probably would have been able to deal with this weakness had other events not occurred to further his fall. In spite of his previous iron will, weakened by Sargol the Daleks manage to manipulate him thoroughly. This serves a crushing blow to his confidence and ego.

At the end of the events with the Daleks the Doctor is left feeling utterly alone, as he now knows that Gallifrey is destroyed. Add to this his recent failings and the transition is almost complete. He might have recovered still, his powers of rationalisation might have allowed him to "look at it all philosophically." Unfortunately he isn't given the chance. His fall from grace was engineered. The Doctor is needed in this shape to serve an entity known as Justyce, and as far as Justyce is concerned the Doctor has not fallen far enough. This is the umbrella plot of season four. The Doctor occasionally garners victories, but always at a price, always with a lesson for the Doctor to be force fed. The Doctor is reduced to a pawn, and can seem to do nothing about it.

In an interesting scene the Doctor is reunited with a companion from his past. She says he looks, well, not quite like the Doctor. The Doctor shows that he realises the changes to his own personality by describing himself as "a little older, more experienced, not quite the optimist I was." Overall Nicholas Briggs deserves full marks for not only playing two sides of the same Doctor, but also for making the transition slowly, smoothly and believably.

Thus we have the greatest evolution ever of a single persona of the Doctor. The final tape of season four sees an end to the Doctor's battle with Justyce, but will season five see the return of some of the earlier traits of his character, his confidence regained? Hopefully, I would like to see him deal with his own feelings, slowly, one at a time. Whereas usually we see the Doctor through the eyes of his companions, Briggs gives us a Doctor with a complex range of emotions who we can identify with personally. All this and still he retains, as Mathew Jones said in DWB99, "that intangible Doctorishness."

Andrew Flint

Artwork. Mike Collins/Steve Pini
Courtesy Marvel UK

As a final postscript to *The Full Circle* (DWB's overview of the Nathan-Turner era, #s 111-114), Kate Orman - the incoming editor of *Data Extract* - considers these events from her perspective as an Australian fan...

The Other Side...

EVER asked yourself this question: what's fandom for?

The obvious answer is that we're a bunch of people with a common interest, out to have fun. We organise ourselves into groups so that we can share information, experiences, opinions, goodies.

But too often the fun is leached out of the fans. If you've ever been involved in a fan club brawl, you'll know what I'm talking about. A group of amateurs forget they're supposed to be enjoying themselves, start to bicker, break apart; the administrivia overwhelms the real business, which is to have a good time. Or if you've ever been cheesed off by a video hoarder who won't share, or you've been slagged off in a letter column, or. .

Of course, arguing is halt the fun; the diversity of opinion in fandom is one of its great delights. And after all, constructive criticism is one of our most important exports. But when it goes beyond constructive to destructive, when it stops being an interesting discussion of our favourite show and becomes bitter and personal, you start to wonder: what's the point?

You know, it's funny. Australian fandom is so laid back these days; some of our more daft internecine squabbles have been ironed out, and everyone's got their feet up, watching BBC Videos and wondering when the next NEW ADVENTURE is going to arrive on our shores. But back in 1984, we were in the grip of a drama that makes DWB's energetic letters column look like a tea time chat. Because Colin Baker had just been cast as the Doctor.

Most of us Down Under probably wouldn't have known Colin Baker if we'd tripped over him, and we certainly weren't familiar with his villainous appearances on series such as THE BROTHERS. I mean, back then we were still calling Peter Davison "Tristan from ALL CREATURES". Colin's casting only distressed a handful of Australian fans. The problem was, they were the fans in charge.

"Now, with The Twin Dilemma plus the departure of Peter Davison, and the violent arrival of Colin Baker, John Nathan-Turner has, in one shattering stroke, killed DOCTOR WHO. A Punk Clown as the Doctor? Never..."

That was how Antony Howe, erstwhile president of the Australasian DOCTOR WHO Fan Club, greeted the arrival of the Sixth Doctor. I'd quote the editorial of Zerinza 32 in more detail, but it's rather offensive, offering personal attacks on Colin Baker (and anyone else who came within firing range). That was published long before Australian fans got to see *The Twin Dilemma* — along with a great deal more of what was essentially propaganda.

When June rolled around and *Twin* was finally shown on the ABC, Antony quit the club: *"Some viewers may like what they see, this does not mean that I have to like it or to watch it, too. Being a DOCTOR WHO fan now means being tainted by JNT's embarrassing monstrosity. In particular I can't represent a fan club for a series that has been completely changed.. . No regular Zerinzas will be produced, as these would have to cover the current and future series."*

All this from four episodes — episodes which proved neither representative of the Sixth Doctor, nor of the direction the show was taking. Antony seems to have missed the violent bits of *The Caves of Androzani* (not to mention *Resurrection of the Daleks*!) as he doesn't make any mention of them when criticising Colin's "violent arrival". And despite his desire not to "cover the current and future series", the very next Zerinza contains four pages of the same hyperbole, plus a long article lambasting the Sixth Doctor.

Reactions to these comments varied from anger — the Perth club dissociated itself from the ADWFC — to amusement. Long-time DWB readers will remember the headline "Aussies revolt! Or revolting Aussies?". Antony's comments were *"grossly exaggerated and highly offensive... too libellous to print as well as being extremely unfair towards the actor concerned."* But a lot of Antipodean fans were convinced. *"After reading the 22nd season section of last Data Extract I, a once dedicated fan, am wondering if I should make the effort to watch the next six shows."* (Brett Jones, Data Extract 37). *"I'm not sure if I want to see [the Sixth Doctor] because according to numerous fan letters Colin's stint as the Doctor is absolutely terrible."* (Scott Walker, DES8) Such a shame for fans to be soured on the series before they'd even had a chance to see it, and judge for themselves.

Happily, the club's been much more restrained under the guidance of Dallas Jones, our retiring president. But the repercussions of the 1984 outburst are still with us, surfacing from time to time as infighting in letter columns. And perhaps in the much more concrete form of the current hiatus.

What's that? Fans causing their favourite show to be cancelled? Sounds ridiculous — until you remember that fandom believes it has the power to bring the show back, using tactics ranging from letter campaigns to full-scale legal warfare. When Australian fans made these sorts of comments in the press - *"I would rather see Dr Who cancelled forever than continue under Nathan-Turner's reign... I'm glad they're stopping it before it slips further. . It's better to look back and remember the good times."* (Steven Collins, Sunday Sun, 10/3/85) - what was the ordinary viewer to think? What about the ABC? The BBC? If even the fans hate the series, what's the point in continuing to make it? This wasn't constructive criticism. It didn't represent what all DOCTOR WHO fans thought. It wasn't true and it wasn't *fair*.

Later on, it would be Sylvester McCoy who summarised the dangers of such over-the-top attacks on the show. *"...I would urge those so-called fans who are criticising it heavily to be less critical of the show as they are only arming the guns of those people who would like to get rid of it, and far from saving it they just might be putting the final nail in the coffin lid..."* (DWB50) This was not to say that fans had to mindlessly praise every minute of DOCTOR WHO — only that fannish criticism, like any form of criticism, has to be balanced. Seeing one episode of a season, one story of a Doctor, and then bagging the entire show out in the popular press is about as unbalanced as you can get.

The ADWFC's "official" position was that not only Colin Baker should go, but that the entire production team should be replaced. In an Operation Who-style campaign, Australian fans were encouraged to write to the Beeb, demanding that a new producer be installed. It was, at the time, the most ambitious, fannish project undertaken, an attempt to actually decide the way in which the show was produced.

It failed, of course, just as Operation Who (effectively) did — no new producer, not a glimmer of interest from the BBC. Why? Well, imagine the way the Beeb sees us. They don't give two hoots about a bunch of amateurs who know absolutely nothing about television production. Fandom wasn't qualified to comment. It still isn't. How many fans do you know who are professional TV producers, directors, writers? Not being professionals doesn't mean we can't analyse direction, compare scripts, ponder continuity, and there are a handful of fans whose interest in TV production has lead to their becoming professionals — another of fandom's important exports. But most of us don't have the ability or the right to make decisions about how DOCTOR WHO is made. Campaigns such as Operation Who were an attempt to demand that our advice — or rather, the advice of a handful of prominent fans — be taken.

It's generally forgotten that Australian fans were the first to decide that "JNT must go!". In fact, the *Twin Dilemma* furore predates DWB's first anti-JNT article by a couple of years. Extraordinarily, Australian opinion seems to have turned completely around. Just look at the club's 25th Anniversary poll:

Favourite Producers

		Points	Percent	Firsts
1.	John Nathan-Turner	405	28.5	9
	Philip Hinchcliffe	405	28.5	8
2	Barry Letts	336	23.6	44
3	Verity Lambert	132	9.3%	13

JNT just manages to pip Hinchcliffe in this poll of over 300 Australian fans. In a country where the Philip Hinchcliffe's era has been repeated nine times, that's a stunning result. How can we explain this strongly pro-JNT trend in fandom Down Under?

Perhaps the most important contributing factor is the fact that we're on the other side of the planet! Despite a number of charming convention guests who dwell Down Under, Australians gaze with green eyes at the opportunities UK fans have — conventions starring everyone from the latest Doctor to the BBC tea lady, bicycle (not jet liner!) trips to location shoots, even the occasional trip behind the scenes

British fans can actually get to meet actors and behind-the-scenes personnel, talk to them, argue with them. They are awash in a heady sea of stars, rumours, and gossip. Down Under, we just get the stories. Dallas explained this very well in a student documentary: "*English fandom is much more interested in what is happening now — because the program's being made there, and therefore they're interested in trying to find out the news, going to the locations, or trying to get into the studio. Australian fandom has got the programme going on all the time... Australian fans are much more interested in the programme as they see it. So I think Australian fandom is a much more literate fandom, much more interested in talking about the programme rather than talking about the latest news, or talking about the latest actors.*"

(Doctor in the House, directed by Kyla Ward, University of Technology, Sydney, 1990.)

Articles such as Tim Munro's extensive account of the JNT years (DWBs111-114) have concentrated on what was happening behind the scenes. But while whatever was happening was happening — and more on this later — Australian fans were firmly showing their approval of Nathan-Turner's work. Another glance at the AWDFC anniversary survey:

Favourite season:
1. Season 25; 2. Season 14; 3. Season 13; 4. Season 12, 5. Season 18; 6. Season 21; 7. Seasons 5, 16, 9 Season 19; 10. Seasons 8, 10.

Favourite stories:
1. *Remembrance of the Daleks;* 2. *The Caves of Androzani;* 3. *The Talons of Weng-Chiang;* 4. *Earthshock;* 5. *Pyramids of Mars;* 6. *Genesis of the Daleks*, 7. *The Five Doctors;* 8. *The Greatest Show in the Galaxy;* 9. *The Robots of Death;* 10. *The Deadly Assassin.*

A good showing for both Hinchcliffe and JNT in these lists, even if the (perhaps transient) lead position of the most recent season and story is dismissed, correlating nicely with their joint position as fave producers. Just look at the classics representing JNT's diverse era in this list. The man undoubtedly produced some of fandom's favourite stories.

Thanks to the constant round of repeats on the ABC, Australian fans have had exposure to different eras of the series. In the last five years we've seen all of Tom Baker's era — much of it more than once — with an emphasis on the classic Hinchcliffe years, helping to maintain that producer's popularity with Australian fans. We had a (nearly) complete run of the Pertwees in 1986. And of course, both fan club meetings and extensive BBC Video releases have helped bring Australian fans up to speed. So, we've had the chance to compare JNT's work with that of other producers. And still, he comes up trumps. Perhaps Oz fandom was judging the results, not the man.

What's even more extraordinary is the fact that, with the exceptions of *Horns of Nimon*, *Underworld*, and *The Gunfighters*, all the top ten least favourite stories were produced by JNT — and he still manages to slide home as Australia's (joint) favourite producer. Clearly, for fans Down Under, the good stories produced by JNT far outweigh the bad ones. We didn't care if he was some sort of ogre behind the scenes, so long as the stories were good!

But was JNT an ogre? Fans seem so often to assume they have all the facts, that they've got the full story. Take the Ian Levine/Eric Saward interview published in this very zine a year or so back. Most of that was Ian having a good old complain about what he saw as his unfair treatment by JNT. But unless a JNT interview appears in DWB (and wouldn't *that* be worth reading!), we're never going to hear his side of the story. How can we tell whether Ian was exaggerating or not? The answer is we can't, and we therefore have to take such a one-sided and personal account with a very large grain of salt.

What is JNT blamed for which isn't his fault? Colin Baker's sacking, the fourteen-episode seasons, the '85 hiatus, the poorly chosen timeslots, the increase in comedy in Season 23 and 24 — decisions out of his hands. And production flaws which were also out of his control. Case in point: *Warriors of the Deep*. Who gets landed with blame for the continuity blunder of the Silurian's third eye? Why, the Producer, of course. Who gets blamed for unavoidable production delays which resulted in the disastrous Myrka costume? Why, the Producer of course. And his critics conveniently forget his later admission that the Myrka had been a "gamble", a "big mistake" (DWM199). Maybe that's why Oz fans think better of JNT — they like a bloke who can admit when he made a blunder. (On the other hand, DWB's official rating for *Warriors* was 91% - slightly more than *Ghost Light*. Makes you wonder what everyone's complaining about, doesn't it?) What about all those famous actors - hired oh-so-gratuitously in a cynical grab for ratings? Goodness knows improving the ratings isn't the Producer's job:

"*I decided to try and have at least one name in each story. This snowballed to such an extent that agents would ring up and say so-and-so would like to play a baddie or a monster.*" (JNT, DWM164) "*I like a policy of guest artistes. I always have and I always will. Because if they are of a certain calibre, it does help the leading actors to rise to the occasion. It heightens not only the profile of the show, but also everyone's performance.*" (DWM 140)

Sound thinking, surely, even if it wasn't always successful. Richard Briers might have been unpopular with the fans, but what about Beryl Reid, or the cast of *Ghost Light*? A related comment. Once the UK fans started to attack Bonnie Langford — long before her actual appearance in WHO — the Oz fans picked up and repeated those bad vibes, and started saying what a rotten bit of casting she was — still without any idea of who the hell she actually was.

Of course, fan criticism tends to be very harsh at the time, just as fan praise tends to be over-the-top. We're so gripped by the new material that we pour over it, watching the new stories until our tapes are worn through, looking for every nuance, every error. The classic example is, of course, *The Deadly Assassin*, a story which was rubbished at the time for rotten continuity — and which is now recognised as classic WHO. Graham Williams, detested at the time for making the show "silly", suddenly became a hero after his tragic death, as his era was reassessed with a more gentle eye. As I write this, The Twin Dilemma is being screened on the ABC — and fans are already saying how surprised they are — it's nowhere near as bad as they'd been led to believe.

Large scale DOCTOR WHO fandom was being born just as JNT began his tenure. No other Producer has ever been under such intense scrutiny. And no other Producer has had the opportunity to take notice of fannish input.

Oh, but that's a bad thing, because fans want endless continuity references, returning villains, in-jokes. Tim Munro comments "it was assumed that fandom knew what was best for the show." The only way to please the fans, then, was not to please the fans — a perfect double-bind. When JNT started to make stories that fandom didn't like, he was obviously doing the right thing! Truth is, fandom *still* assumes it knows what's best for the show, and with no more reason than before.

If we're slagging JNT off so much, why doesn't he just sue us? Because we can't hurt him. How would JNT demonstrate that his career's been damaged by fandom? Again, think of the way TV professionals must see us. Why care what a tiny minority of over-excited fans have to say — about a subject they're not even qualified to comment on? All fandom can do is hurt the show — by giving it a reputation as rubbish. After the embarrassment of 1984, Australian fandom is very aware of that danger.

It's true that JNT stayed on longer than any other Producer. After the disappointments of the '85 hiatus and the low ratings of Season 23, surely, it would have been the perfect time to get up and go. Why'd he stay? "*I've asked to move on from DOCTOR WHO. I'm leaving because at the moment my CV has only one line on it... I've been asking to move on for years...*" (DWM140) "*...ten years is a very long chunk out of your life. It's way past time that somebody fresh came in and took it off in a different direction.*" (DWM153)

Interesting. It looks like JNT himself was trying to get away from DOCTOR WHO — but his superiors, noting the series' continued success, wouldn't let him go. That's a very different image to the dictator clinging onto "his" series. JNT got his second wind with the arrival of Sylvester McCoy and Andrew Cartmel. This was a turning point for WHO, as a new style was forged from the embers of the previous era, a style which would at last bring the series up to date. There were "*new avenues to explore*", and JNT was always interested in "*working on shows which have a healthy audience*". (DWM112). Perhaps, for the BBC, it simply came down to a matter of money:

"*I think what I'd like to say I've done is elevate the profile of the show... I think certain sales, and I'm not talking about America, I'm talking about other countries, have been directly made by myself. Directly. I mean I've sold it across a desk. That is not what I'm paid for... There's no financial incentive. It's just that I do very firmly believe that whatever you're producing in television, it's part of the job to promote it to the fullest, and to ensure that it's seen by as many people as possible.*" (JNT, DWM140). JNT's money-managing skills made DOCTOR WHO into one of the Beeb's most cost-efficient programs. For the tiny amount of money they put in, they got a tremendous output — in overseas sales, in merchandise, and in ratings. The Beeb felt safe about moving WHO's timeslot and evening around, and finally putting it up against the competition's blockbuster, because they knew that JNT was making it a success. Sadly, the Beeb have never seemed to want to put as much into DOCTOR WHO as they have gotten out of it: witness the cancellation of the special, which would've been really quite amazingly profitable...

...but let's come back to fandom. You can see from the Australian "favourites" list that JNT has produced some of DOCTOR WHO's greatest classics, including *Earthshock*, *Fenric*, *Revelation* and *Resurrection of the Daleks* — and what about *Kinda*, *Logopolis*, *Ghost Light*, and probably several of your favourite stories? Sure, he also produced duds like *Timeflight* and *Silver Nemesis*. So? Every Producer has made some clunkers. It's only fair to give JNT credit for the superb stories he helped to craft, as well as criticising the rotten ones.

Some fans seem to have the strange idea that because *they* don't like a story, it isn't any good. Well, I can't stand most Pertwee stories, but that doesn't stop me from appreciating their good points — and it doesn't mean I go about slagging off Barry Letts. Anyway, if you think the Pertwee stories are brill, and I disagree, which of us is right? Australian fan Paul Kennedy put it this way: "A BLAKE'S SEVEN fan once told me that rather than looking for things in stories you dislike, try and find things that you do like. I did just this, and since then, have always found something in each story that I like. What should Doctor Who be like? To answer that would simply be placing my selfish view on others. I like the way it is and that is, that it is always changing directions." (Strange Matter 3, January 1989)

JNT's unusually long stay on the program did not mean that DOCTOR WHO remained static for those ten years. In fact, the variety of the Nathan Turner era is a microcosm of the series' changeability. JNT stories are hard science fiction, and grimly realistic action-adventure, and political allegories, and comedies, and psychodramas... he dared to do a pure historical, to kill a companion, to attempt the longest single DOCTOR WHO story, to experiment with making the new Doctor's story the last in the season. Not every gamble paid off, but the show was always developing, always changing. Perhaps, after all, this is the real reason for the popularity of JNT's era with Australian fans: there's something for everyone. In fact, it's difficult to talk about "the JNT era", because no two of his seasons were quite the same. Even if you despise, say, Season 24, you can always watch Season 25

and more importantly, if someone else likes Season 24, or even likes JNT (grief!), we can respect their opinion instead of slicing 'em up in the letcol. The real issue here is not whether JNT was a brilliant Producer or a rotten Producer. For fandom, the issue is not whether we criticise, but how we do it; whether we're constructive or destructive. We can take the whole debate less seriously. We can apply a little healthy scepticism to the rumours and gossip. We can put a bit of the fun back in fandom.

Kate Orman

STAR TREK THE NEXT GENERATION

7.Dark Page 6th November 1993
WRITER HILARY BADER; DIRECTOR LES LANDAU; MUSIC JAY CHATTAWAY; VISUAL EFFECTS SUPERVISOR RON MOORE

Mrs Troi makes what is said to be her last visit to THE NEXT GENERATION leading to erroneous rumours that she would not survive the episode. It is, however, one of her more serious visits to the Enterprise.

The Enterprise hosts a delegation from the Karhen, who wish to join the Federation but have no conception of spoken communication – they are completely telepathic, at least among themselves, and are unfamiliar with speech. Lwaxana Troi is to instruct them in oral communication after learning how to use their unique kind of telepathy. She appears unusually tired and confides to Captain Picard that dealing with the Karhen has been an exhausting process. They transmit images to one another, not words as the Betezeds do. Lwaxana is having headaches and is more than willing to retire to the sidelines until her daughter arrives. Lwaxana then makes haste to introduce her to the head of the delegation, Maiquises, who is the father of her star pupil Hedril. Deanna is embarrassed to find that Mrs. Troi has been matchmaking again, and they quarrel, but Lwaxana becomes emotionally distraught rather easily and Deanna relents. Maiquises apologises to Deanna for making her uncomfortable. He tells her how extraordinary her mother has been. She is the first outsider to learn their kind of telepathy. He has been puzzled by the fact that communication with her has been very different. Members of the Karhen have nothing hidden in their minds but with Lwaxana there is always a part of her that is dark and cannot be seen. Troi thinks he is talking about some kind of privacy that her mother wishes to maintain.

Deanna is discussing this with Riker when they are almost immediately interrupted by Lwaxana, who becomes enraged to find the two sitting together in 10 Forward. She demands that Riker stay away from her daughter, adding that she would be married by now if it were not for him. Deanna takes her to sickbay, where Lwaxana calms down and apologises for her outburst. Doctor Crusher says she is showing signs of considerable stress and that she needs to rest and refrain from telepathy for a while.

Lwaxana insists upon accompanying Deanna as she takes over the burden of communication with the delegation. While Deanna explains poetry to the adults, Hedril wanders off to a small pond and accidentally slips off the edge, landing harmlessly on its shallow bottom. While everyone is momentarily distracted, Lwaxana slumps to the floor. Dr Crusher cannot find a physiological cause for the coma, which is almost as if her brain has shut itself down. Neural activity is almost non-existent except for the telepathic centre. Picard and Deanna ask Maiquises if using telepathy with them could have hurt her. He tries to make them understand that it is "bad thoughts" that have hurt Lwaxana, but cannot find the words to describe what he means. He tries to communicate what he means telepathically to Deanna, but the message is both unclear and painful to her.

Deanna decides that she must try to contact her mother telepathically, but she is not strong enough to go deep into Lwaxana's unconscious mind on her own. Maiquises is able to see more but cannot understand the images he finds in Lwaxana's mind. Instead, he leads Deanna into the deeper portions of her mother's mind.

Deanna finds herself in an empty hallway, and ignoring attempts by illusions of Picard and a wolf to deflect her meets a man in an old style Starfleet uniform — her father, who died when she was a child. Deanna knows that this is another distraction created by her mother but Ian Troi says that her mother does not want to see her. When Deanna pulls herself away she meets Hedril. She tries to ask the child why she is here but Mrs. Troi suddenly appears and screams at Deanna to leave her alone.

Lwaxana Troi is, of course, again played by Majel Barrett Roddenberry, who is expected to continue to appear from time to time on DEEP SPACE 9. Rene Auberjonois says they both enjoyed her visit and look forward to developing her relationship with Odo. Her exit from TNG is certainly more serious then any episode she has done save for Half a Life, but a bit of the old Lwaxana erupts, if only in the background of a scene when Picard is taking his leave of her at the party. She gives his rear a parting pat which disconcerts the Captain.

Norman Large is the sympathetic Maiquises and Kirsten Dunst is his daughter Hedril. Amick Byram plays the latest long lost relative to appear on TNG, Deanna's father Ian. It was originally suggested that Mr. Troi had been some sort of dip omat, and earlier conversations between mother and daughter never left the impression that he had died when Deanna was very young. All those who assumed that Lwaxana's dark secret concerns Troi's parentage should refrain from betting.(7)

8.Attached 13th November 1993
WRITTEN BY NICHOLAS SAGAN; DIRECTOR JONATHAN FRAKES; MUSIC DENNIS MCCARTHY; VISUAL EFFECTS SUPERVISOR DAVID STEWS

To the surprise of the very fans who have clamoured for it since year one, the writers finally allow Captain Picard and Beverly Crusher to admit to their attraction for each other. But where do they go from here?

As the Enterprise arrives at Kes-Prit III to evaluate a highly unusual request for associate membership in the Federation. Over breakfast, Dr Crusher realises that Jean-Luc is disturbed by the notion of a planet wanting to have only part of its population admitted, yet the Kes seek membership while the Prit are reclusive to the point of xenophobia.

When Crusher and Picard beam down, the Kes report that the officers have not arrive. While Worf seeks an explanation, Picard and Crusher awaken in a prison. They quickly see that they have a device attached to the back of their necks. The Doctor decides it is some sort of implant directly connected to the brain stem. Soon, members of the Prit Security Ministry pay them a visit. The Prit believe that the Federation wants to establish a military alliance with the Kes, and have implanted devices which will soon calibrate to their prisoners' psi-wave patterns, allowing them to read their thoughts.

Worf and Data report that a tractor beam deflected the ship's transporter beam to Prit territory. The Kes ambassador apologises and tells Riker that they will insert a hostage rescue team into the Prit capitol on three hours notice. Riker is appalled that they do not want to try diplomacy first but Ambassador Mauric assures him that the Prit are a fanatical people who refuse all outside communications. Riker insists that they must try before turning to force. Mauric asks if they can establish a command post on the ship since they fear there has been a breech in Kes communications. Worf offers to assist them, but they feel the existing protections are inadequate.

The situation on the planet quickly becomes more complicated. A Prit guard leaves a food dish in the cell, which turns out to contain Beverly's medical tricorder loaded with a map of an escape route and instructions for getting out of the cell and the prison. They decide to chance escape. The route leads them through a dangerous cave over lava flows and up a cliff face to the surface, but before they reach the top they discover that they are beginning to be able to hear each others thoughts through the implants.

Riker's efforts to contact the Prit government are rebuffed at every turn. Finally the Security Minister herself hails them and demands they stop trying to transmit to them. While the Prit have no weapons that pose a serious threat to the ship, they have made no progress on finding their officers. Riker reluctantly turns to Mauric, but learns the Kes have already taken action. Mauric, who refuses to discuss their plans outside the room they have secured, tells him that they have freed Picard and Crusher and provided them with a map that will lead them to the border. He says that Picard and Beverly will be led to a village where they have Prit sympathisers. Their people will then get them through the force field at the border. Riker is disturbed at the idea that his friends are expected to go into a Prit village where they are obviously going to be spotted as aliens.

Picard and Beverly find travel on the surface easier but are disconcerted by the thoughts they can now read. Picard discovers that Beverly always seems to have some acerbic comment on the tip of her tongue although she usually holds it back. Beverly realises that Jean-Luc often appears more confident then he in fact feels. They move on from picking up random thoughts to being able to delve more deeply into each others minds. It is a bit overwhelming and they decide to try to get some distance between themselves to gain some relief from the constant jumble of thoughts. But they learn that moving more than a few feet apart causes intense pain. They are as stuck with each other as if they were chains. They are beginning to find the sharing rather compelling when they realise that there are Prit searching the area for them. The route on the map they were given leads to a village rather than the border itself. They decide to take the more direct path to the border themselves and assume they can find a way across when they reach it.

But when they do not arrive at the village, the Kes become suspicious. Mauric accuses Picard of meeting secretly with the Prit to form an alliance and using this whole situation to trick the Kes into revealing their operatives. Riker realises that the Kes are scarcely less paranoid then the Prit.

Beverly and Picard have settled in for the night around a small campfire, bothered by thoughts of food. They have not been able to find anything that the tricorder will approve as edible. Thoughts of food lead to a discussion of breakfast and Beverly discovers that Jean-Luc has been making the elaborate meals she has been making lately not because she does not like them either - she was only doing it because she thought he enjoyed it. Thoughts of their friendship lead deeper and deeper until Beverly says she did not realise how strongly he felt. The mention of Jack provokes further reflections until she asks why he never told her he loved her. The reason in the beginning was simple. She was married to his best friend. He felt guilty about how he felt even before Jack died. Afterwards he promised himself that he would never tell her how he felt about her. She now knows that was why he opposed her assignment to the Enterprise so many years ago. He admits that, but says that over time he realised that he no longer had those feelings. As they settle in for the night, it is obvious that he is not telling the truth about that and she knows it.

The ending to this episode is highly inconclusive leaving open the question of whether the writers will allow a romance to develop or if they will go back to ignoring the special feelings that exist between the two senior officers, as mostly happened after the first season of NEXT GENERATION. It is interesting, however, that they returned to the premise that the Captain's feelings may be stronger than the Doctor's, which was the starting point when the series began but the emphasis later changed.

The whole subplot involving the Kes and Prit is not a resounding success and bears little examination. Worf and Riker appear amazingly ineffectual as they go about the task of finding their people. Robin Gammell is the Kes Ambassador and Lenore Kasdorf is Loren, the Prit Security Minister.(8)

9.Force of Nature 20th November 1993
WRITTEN BY NAREN SHANKAR; DIRECTOR ROBERT LEDERMAN; MUSIC DENNIS MCCARTHY; VISUAL EFFECTS SUPERVISOR RON MOORE

Plans for an environmentally sensitive episode had been in the works for several seasons. Unfortunately, they unleashed it anyway.

The Starfleet medical transport ship Fleming is overdue and missing somewhere in the Hakaris Corridor, a pathway through an area of space unusually dense in dilithium particles. Starfleet discovered the corridor, which facilitates travel through the sector. The only inhabited planet in the area, Harkaris III, reports no visitors recently except a Ferengi ship, leading the Enterprise crew to wonder if the Fleming might have been hijacked.

As the Enterprise investigates the corridor, they encounter a drifting Ferengi vessel which seems to have lost

power in all of its field coils. As the Enterprise moves closer the apparently lifeless ship fires on them. This show of defiance is shortlived, however. The ship is nearly helpless. The Daimon finally talks to Picard, accusing the Enterprise of disabling his ship and then moving in for the kill.

The Ferengi claims that they had approached what seemed to be a Federation signal buoy, which then emitted a massive verteron pulse which crippled their systems. He thinks this is a new Federation weapon. Picard protests that the Federation would hardly mine the corridor, and is told that the Ferengi saw the Fleming several days ago.

Following the Fleming's last known heading, the Enterprise finds an unknown debris field. They enter the field searching for evidence that this is the remains of the Fleming but find a small metal object which begins to emit the same kind of field that damaged the Ferengi ship. They are unable to escape the same effect and systems go down. A small vessel then comes along side and two intruders beam into engineering. Hakarian scientists who are using this unconventional means to get attention. They claim they are trying to make them understand that "you are killing us."

The scientists claim that warp fields cause a dangerous reaction in this part of space and that the effect is cumulative. As ship s pass through the heavily travelled corridor, the fabric of space is being damaged in ways that threaten the existence of their planet. Geordi protests that this theory has already been evaluated and dismissed but Seroca claims that her data was incomplete when the Federation science council first reviewed her work. Her brother Rabal explains that he had discounted her theories at first as well and only later came to appreciate how brilliant his sister is.

Captain Picard is outraged by their methods, but unwilling to dismiss their fears out of hand. If they will deactivate their devices and restore power to the ship, he promises to review their research and bring it before the council again. Rabal is ready to agree but Seroca says he is giving up the only leverage they have. What they have been doing is only an inconvenience to ships whereas she believes their whole planet is threatened if something is not done immediately to inhibit use of warp drive. According to her theory there are regions of potential subspace instability in the corridor which could produce a rift in the fabric of normal space. It is generally believed that it would take a warp field a million times normal strength to produce such a danger, but she believes the effect is cumulative and that the heavy traffic through the corridor poses a special danger.

While this argument goes unresolved, Riker reports that they have found the Fleming. It has experienced the same power failure as themselves and is unable to get underway. As they are about to complete repairs to the Enterprise, Seroca takes the small ship to a point between the two Federation vessels. By the time she is detected she has already set her warp engines to overload and announces that she will give them proof. The warp core explosion creates a subspace rift of just the type she had predicted. The Enterprise is outside the rift, although endangered by energy distortion waves, but the Fleming is caught up. It is unsafe for the Enterprise to enter the rift using warp power but impulse engines would take too long to save the Fleming's crew before their ship breaks up.

Technobabble reigns supreme, offset only slightly by a surprisingly unamusing side story about Data's efforts to train his cat to be better behaved. The only major surprise in the story is that Spot is said to be female. A concluding edict that henceforth Federation vessels will restrict their speed to no higher than warp 5 as much as possible dismayed fans committed to full throttles and blazing phasers. Worf says that the Klingons will, of course, observe the limitation - which seems pretty uncharacteristic behaviour for the average warrior!

Michael Corbett is the reasonable Rabal and Margaret Reed is his zealous sister Seroca.(5)

10 Inheritance 27th November 1993

Teleplay by Dan Koppel and Rene Echevarria, Story by Dan Koppel; Director Robert Scheerer, Music Jay Chattaway, Visual Effects Supervisor David Stipes

This is the season for familiar relationships, lost loves and impossible meetings on TNG. At least Brent Spiner does not insist on playing every member of the Soong clan.

Two scientists come aboard the Enterprise to discuss possible solutions to the problems of Atrea IV, whose molten core is solidifying, and which will be uninhabitable within eighteen months. The Traynors are husband and wife, but Juliana is a human who has lived here for many years.

Data suggests using phaser-triggered plasma enfusers to trigger a chain reaction which would stabilize the core at 93% of its previous temperature. The scientists agree that this is the only feasible solution and it must be tried, whatever the risks. But Juliana Traynor lingers after the meeting to speak to Data alone and asks him if he has any idea who she is. He is baffled by her question, which prompts her to observe that he must have lost all of his early memories. She claims that she was there at his beginning — indeed, that she helped create him.

She was not just a colleague of Dr. Soong, she was his wife and, so, in a sense, Data's mother. She explains that they wiped Data's memory after reconfiguring his programming when he was a "child." He himself remembers nothing before waking up on Omecron Theta IV when found by Starfleet officers, although he discovered he had the journals of all the colonists who perished on that world stored in his brain. Juliana recalls that he was an awkward child, whom the other colonists feared might become like Lore. So they decided to remove his emotions to prevent that possibility.

Data is reluctant to accept this woman as his mother as there was no Juliana Soong listed in the colony's records, although there was another Juliana. Mrs. Traynor explains that she was then much younger then Dr. Soong and had to slip away to another planet to get married because her mother disapproved of Soong. Data still wonders why his father never talked about her to him, explaining that they met before Soong's death. Juliana is shocked to hear Soong is dead, though she notes that they did not part on the best of terms, growing apart as Soong always cared as much or more for his work as for her.

Data later confides to Geordi that he is disconcerted about having a past he does not remember, but finds flight records that confirm her story and decides to get to know her better. He is in for some surprises. She says she wanted to make him female but Soong chose to make him in his image.

As they work together drilling tunnels for the plasma infusers they grow closer. Juliana is pleased that he has learned good manners — they had trouble initially getting him to wear clothes. Data is impressed by her mathematical ability, and finds she is a skilled viola player when she asks to accompany him on the viola. In fact, she says it was she who insisted that he be given a capacity for creativity. She is troubled by his painting of Lal, and reveals that they had created three androids before Lore who did not survive for long. She admits that she had avoided seeking him out because of guilt — she had not wanted to bring him from Omicron Theta because she was afraid he would turn out like Lore, and she could not bear to dismantle him too.

Data goes to Doctor Crusher and asks her to review Juliana's medical scans. She can find nothing wrong except mild hyper-tension, but Data insist he has reason to believe that Juliana is not who she claims to be.

This episode contains a number of revelations, including another visit by the late Dr. Soong, who IS played by Brent Spiner. His conversation with Data seems to contain a large loophole, but who is counting at this point? The whole Soong saga has been replete with such oddities from the time the original intention of ascribing Data's creation to an unknown alien race was suddenly abandoned. Another future bit of trivia fodder slides by so quickly it can be easily missed, it is stated in passing that Data is programmed to simulate ageing — thus allowing Brent Spiner to age, when Data presumably should not. You may not have been worrying about that, but Mr. Spiner and the producers of *Star Treks VII - X* have.

Fionnula Flanagan is Data's 'mom', Walter Lithgow plays her nerdy husband Pran (7)

11 Parallels - 4th December 1993

Written by Brannon Braga, Director Robert Weimer, Music Dennis McCarthy; Visual Effects Supervisor Ron Moore

The writers continue to grant long deferred wishes by concocting an avenue to that Troi/Worf tryst. Michael Dorn has been seeking for several years. But if Braga is involved, can a techno-conundrum be far behind? Haul out your popular guide to quantum physics.

Worf returns victorious from the bat'telh competition on Forgas III. He is met by Commander Riker, who the Klingon fears may be planning something awful for his birthday — like a surprise party. Riker denies this, but then the rest of Worf's friends leap out to surprise the exasperated Worf with a cake and gifts. While Troi and Beverly pass around slices of the chocolate cake, Worf learns that the Captain cannot attend the party. Data presents him with an abstract painting which Troi insists upon hanging on the wall. When Geordi speaks to Worf the Klingon suddenly feels dizzy, and looks up to see that the cake is now yellow and Captain Picard is asking him how old he is.

The ship approaches the Argos Array, which has stopped transmitting for the third time this year. The Array appears to be intact and functioning — but the information it gathers is being transmitted to an uninhabited sector of space. They find the Array has been reprogrammed to observe various Federation sites, including the Utopia Planitia yards. There is also a visual log recording of a Cardassian ship approaching the Array, which arouses Worf's suspicions. But his investigation is interrupted by another bout of dizziness, which Doctor Crusher says is a side effect of the concussion he suffered at the bat'telh competition. She says this was why he finished 9th in the event! He rushes to his quarters to find that his trophy confirms this!

Returning to the Bridge, Data asks about the results of a scan that he is not running. Then a Cardassian ship appears and challenges the Captain about their proximity to their border. Worf observes that this is the ship they saw in the Array's logs, but everyone claims to know nothing about any such records. Worf goes to his quarters and meets Deanna, telling her how everyone else's memories are wrong. When Geordi joins them Worf feels faint again and then notices that Data's painting has changed position ...and its appearance. He next finds himself on the bridge with the Captain telling him to raise shields. Disoriented, he freezes, finding the controls have been rearranged, and allows them to be hit. Geordi is injured in engineering, and the Enterprise is forced to retreat, as the Array is destroyed.

Worf asks to be relieved and goes to his quarters. He finds flowers on the table and an entry in his personal log lamenting that he is unable to attend the Forgas III competition this year. Deanna arrives, complaining that he had locked the door to the cabin. She breezes past him and goes into the bedroom. When Worf timidly peaks in there, she pats the bed and tells him to come relax for a while. He is even more disconcerted when she unties his hair and nibbles on his neck. He tells her that she is behaving inappropriately but she only laughs — is it inappropriate for a wife?

This episode has been one of the most popular in a long time with fans of the series. The unlikely pairing of the gruff Klingon with the petite, refined Counsellor is full of potential comedy, which is exploited to the full without undercutting the plausibility that such a relationship may yet happen on the "real" Enterprise. The journey through many alternative Enterprises affords glimpses of alternative developments as well - including a ship where Picard did not survive the Borg and Riker is now Captain, and one where the Borg are on the verge of total victory.

In addition to the regular crew, WJ Wheaton makes a brief appearance as Lt. Crusher, Security Chief (who saves the ship!) (9)

STAR TREK DEEP SPACE NINE

5 Melora 6th November 1993

Teleplay by Evan Carlos Somers and Steven Baum and Michael Piller & James Crocker; Story by Evan Carlos Somers, Director Winrich Kolbe; Music Dennis McCarthy; Visual Effects Supervisor Glenn Neufeld

Not letting an idea go to waste, the original plan to have a crew member who would have to be in a wheel chair under "normal" gravity because she came from a low gravity planet is recycled into a romance for Doctor Bashir. Kissing while floating photographed nicely, the rest of the episode seemed dedicated to dubious science and mediocre writing.

Dr Bashir is busily preparing for the arrival of Ensign Melora Pavlar, who is to undertake cartography missions into the Gamma Quadrant. She is the only Elysian in Starfleet, and comes from a low gravity planet. Anti-grat devices cannot be used to aid her movement on the station because of Cardassian construction so Bashir has had O'Brien working on a rather old fashioned chair with wheels for her and also on putting as many ramps in as possible to offset the stations many raised doorways - another gift of the Cardassians.

They cannot give her total access but have done as much as possible before her arrival. O'Brien cannot understand why she doesn't just have them use the transporter to beam her around, but Bashir says this is consistent with her whole history at the Academy. She asks for no special assistance and does as much for herself as possible. She will be comfortable offduty at least as they have prepared quarters for her which can be sealed and changed to a low gravity environment.

Bashir confides to Dax that he has studied Melora's career and admires her very much. When she arrives, she is walking slowly, and rather painfully, with the aid of two canes and a metal exoskeleton that acts as a brace for her body. She is glad to see that Bashir has her "trolley car" waiting, but is displeased that he has made some modifications to her requested design. She is also unhappy to have learned that Dax has been assigned to accompany her on flights into the Gamma Quadrant. She takes this an indication that Sisko does not trust her to handle the runabout herself. Dax assures her that he would not allow any new Ensign to assume sole authority over a runabout, but she assumes he sees her as disabled.

Another new arrival causes trouble for Quark. Falit Kot has just been released from eight years in a Romulan prison — time served thanks to information provided by Quark to save his own skin. Quark claims to be delighted to see him but Kot says that he has come to DS9 to kill him. Quark fails to buy Kot off and goes to Odo with his fears. Odo is not very kind to Quark but he has Kot in to warn him. He says they have something in common - he doesn't like Quark either. But he can't let Kot kill him just the same. Kot denies that he intends any harm.

Sisko's first meeting with Melora is as combative as her encounter with Dax and Bashir. She expects him to view her presence as a problem and assumes Bashir is at the meeting to offer medical opinions about her condition. Sisko makes it clear he will not have his authority questioned and that her attitude is inappropriate. She replies that no one can understand until they sit in the chair. She left her home because she has always wanted to explore space. She prefers to work alone and not be dependent on anyone else.

Undeterred by her caustic comments, Bashir visits her quarters to make sure all the arrangements are satisfactory. He turns aside her barbs and observes that she attacks to

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keep the rest of the universe on the defensive. Wearing her down, he asks her out to dinner at a new Klingon restaurant on the Promenade where she impresses the surly chef with her command of Klingon invective.

Despite this promising start, things do not go well the next day. Wanting to get a jump on the mission, Melora goes down to the runabout pad well in advance of Dax and takes a fall when she tries to manoeuvre the chair over the door rim. Unable to get up without help, she lies there until found by the others. Her injuries are not serious but the mission is postponed for a day. Bashir reminds her that in space everyone depends on others. He also recalls work done years before on boosting muscle strength through injections affecting the neural cortex. The work had been discontinued but he now wonders if it could help Melora. When they go back to her quarters this time they experiment with kissing in low gravity. On her mission with Dax the next day they discuss the problems with Starfleet romances where lovers can be assigned to duty light years apart.

Bashir has becomes increasingly excited about his research on strengthening Melora's motor skills. In an experiment, Melora is able to lift her legs off the examination table herself after a brief treatment. She is able to move "normally" for a time but it soon wears off. Bashir tells her that with each treatment she will get stronger and the effect will last longer. But switching back to low gravity will only confuse her body. Eventually the treatments would produce a permanent change..

This episode brought howls of outrage from fans not for the rather dubious romance, but because of the shaky science displayed in the story. Landing the guest star of the week in an old-fashioned wheel chair is explained away with some vague reference to Cardassian construction of the station preventing use of the anti-grav devices familiar to Trek audiences. This flimsy device was quickly forgotten just two episodes later when an anti-grav stretcher is called for and arrives with no difficulty! Furthermore, Melora is said to "fly" in her low gravity quarters and on her home world. Indeed, she has a photo in her room of herself and her brother flying which looks like a promo for one of the *Superman* films. The idiocy of this, and the fact that she did not have the willowy, elongated body we all learned in school would be expected of beings from low gravity worlds caused grinding of teeth among the scientifically inclined.

On the other hand, the comedy relief provided by Ron Taylor as a Klingon fast food chef was well received. This scene also scored points for Bashir as he appeared to eat a live, wriggling worm as part of the meal. Daphne Ashbrook plays Melora, who at least serves to underscore that this season Julian Bashir will no longer be seen in hot pursuit of Dax. (And it's art imitates life, as Daphne is Siddig El Fadhil's girlfriend off camera.) In fact, Quark and Dax seem to be closer than any other couple in the early episodes. Peter Crombie, who plays Crazy Joe Davola on Seinfeld, plays Falit Kot beneath a most impressive and ugly face that seems to have the nose connected to the lower lip.(5)

7 Rules of Acquisition 13th November 1993
Teleplay by Ira Steven Behr, Story by Hilary Bader, Director David Livingston; Music Dennis M. Carthy; Visual Effects Supervisor Gary Hutzel
It's Yent comes to DS9 and throw in the Grand Nagus as well

Beaten by Dax at the Ferengi card game, Tongo, Rom's humiliation at being bested by a mere female is only slightly mollified by the news that it was Curzon Dax who initially perfected her gamesmanship. He grumbles that he prefers Ferengi women, who are unclothed and submissive - and not allowed out of the house. Quark is preoccupied with trying to sit closer to Dax but his new waiter, Pehl, finally gets his attention long enough to demonstrate the potential profits to be made in substituting thirst-inducing sand peas for other bar snacks. Quark is impressed even more when the young man indicates he knows all 285 Rules of Acquisition and the commentaries on them. Rom is immediately jealous of the attention Pehl is getting from his brother.

The game is interrupted by a message from Grand Nagus Zek indicating that he is on his way to DS9. The head of the Ferengi alliance feels the time has come to begin expansion into the Gamma Quadrant and he wants Quark to be his chief negotiator with a race called The Dozie. This news is not especially pleasing to Sisko and Kira, who tell Zek that the Bajorans are concerned that he wants to use the station as a Ferengi business outpost. Kira in particular is quite blunt about the kind of reputation this could attract. Zek finds her insolence quite attractive and asks if Bajor could use 50,000 kilos of fertilizer. He offers to let her have it at cost, but Sisko insists it will be a gift to the Bajorans. Zek offers more personal favours to the Major herself.

Zek tells Quark that they may be looking at the most profitable opportunity in Ferengi business history, then astounds the bar keep by ordering him to negotiate for 10,000 vats of tulleberry wine. He says this will establish a Ferengi presence in the Gamma Quadrant. Quark is sure Zek is up to something and Pehl warns that the Nagus will be able to blame Quark if negotiations fail. Quark agrees and decides he needs help — and rejects Rom's offer of assistance to offer the job to Pehl. When Pehl returns to his quarters at night, "he" removes a pair of ear extensions and happily gets out of his binding coat to reveal that Pehl is actually a female who would never be allowed to participate in business if the truth were known.

The Dozie arrive and prove to be a belligerent as Klingons, but they expend their energy in fighting over business rather than honour. They claim it is an insult to send anyone to them other then Zek himself and they only offer 5,000 vats of wine. Pehl tells them they must deal with Quark or go home empty handed. Zek occupies himself with sending an expensive gift to Kira, who returns it immediately. She tells Dax she cannot understand why she seems to actually like the Ferengi. The Trill admits she does admire them in a way — in fact, over seven lifetimes she cannot think of a single race she has enjoyed more. Kira protests that they are greedy, misogynist, untrustworthy little trolls, and Dax agrees. But once you accept that, she says, they can be a lot of fun.

Dax's familiarity with Ferengi makes her notice how unusually loyal Pehl seems to be to Quark, defending him to Zek when most Ferengi would only be too happy to join the Nagus in his attack on a potential rival. She makes a point of engaging the waiter in private conversation and discovers her secret. Not only is she a woman, she loves Quark. She has resorted to this disguise because Ferengi women are not allowed to leave the house, wear clothes or learn, yet she knows she is as smart as any man. So she made herself a pair of prosthetic lobes and set out to make her fortune.

But this promising partnership has run into a formidable problem. Quark was having a hard enough time trying to persuade the Dozie to sell them 10,000 vats of wine. Now Zek as raised the order to 100,000. The Dozie are outraged and leave the station, bringing down Zek's anger on Quark. Pehl insists they will borrow Zek's ship and follow them back to the Gamma Quadrant to close the deal on their home planet. After they leave Rom becomes still more bitter over being cast aside and ransacks Pehl's quarters. He is quite surprised when he finds a case with her spare set of ears.

Wallace Shawn returns as the Grand Nagus, duplicitous as ever. His interest in Kira provides the comic highpoints. Helene Udy is the disguised female who knows the rules inside out. Brian Thompson and Emilia Crow are the Dozie negotiators, who have painted faces and body suits that seem to be borrowed from luge competitions. This is the first episode to mention The Dominion, the emerging adversary for the Federation in the Gamma Quadrant.(8)

8 Necessary Evil 20th November 1993
Writer Peter Allan Fields; Director James L. Conway, Music Jay Chattaway; Visual Effects Supervisor Glenn Neufeld
Another excellent script from the staff specialist in character stories f his in more of Odo's past — specifically how he came to be security officer under the Cardassians.

Quark visits Bajor at the request of Paltra, a woman he has not seen since she came under suspicion of killing her husband on the space station during the Cardassian occupation. She talks about that time, saying she did not kill him, even though that shape-shifter thought so. She wants Quark to retrieve a box for her that is hidden in the wall of her husband's old chemist's shop on DS9. Quark wonders why she does not get it herself, but his interest is engaged when she promises to give him 5 bars of latinum and her gratitude for his trouble. He and Rom find a small sealed box in the wall and open it, but are disappointed to find it contains nothing but a piece of paper with eight Bajoran names on it. Quark sends Rom to get a copying device. While he is alone, a man sent by Paltra takes the list from him and shoots him. Rom's hysterics bring Bashir immediately and he is able to keep Quark alive, at least for now, but unconscious. Odo wastes no time in squeezing Rom for information, pointing out that he stands to inherit the business if Quark dies. He tells Odo that his brother was hired by someone on Bajor to find a box hidden years ago in the chemist's shop. Odo knows exactly what shop he is talking about - and vividly recalls in the log Sisko has insisted he keep his first meeting there with Gul Dukat, the Cardassian Commander of the station in those days.

Odo had no idea why Dukat had sent for him, or how he even knew about him. But Odo was discounting that he has been something of a celebrity. Dukat was among a group of visiting Cardassian dignitaries who were taken to see him when he was still at the institute where he lived for years after he was discovered as a child. Odo had grown tired of being on display and performing as a shape-shifter in this place, finally walking out on his Bajoran keepers, saying he could learn more outside the institute. Dukat showed him the body of a murdered Bajoran, a shopkeeper on the station. To Odo's surprise, the Cardassian orders him to investigate the crime — otherwise Dukat will follow his superiors' standard procedure by executing ten randomly selected Bajorans. Dukat has chosen Odo because Bajorans will not talk to Cardassians but seem to bring their disputes to him for resolution.

Logically, Odo first spoke with the widow and noted that she had not spent any time crying over her dead husband. Paltra is quick to claim her husband had been having an affair with a girl who had arrived on the station a few weeks ago. When she confronted him about it her husband said he would break off the relationship. Eager to shift suspicion, Paltra took Odo to the promenade and pointed out Kira as her husband's spurned lover.

The circumstances of Quark's shooting have recalled the same events for the major and she comes to ask Odo if he thinks this new crime has anything to do with Vetrick. Odo says it reopens a five-year- old case he has never closed and goes to try to recover every scrap Rom can remember about that list of names. With considerable pressure Rom thinks he remembers the first name on the list as being something like "Che'so." Odo asks Kira is she remembers anyone from the old days with a name like that, but she reminds him that she was not there very long. She seems concerned that they have never talked about that time but he says there is nothing to talk about - she was innocent. But she knows that would not have been enough to save her in those days.

During the occupation the station was overcrowded and full of checkpoints and random searches by security patrols. Suspicion was a way of life. When Odo first approached Kira, she did not realise at first that he was in effect a security officer. Once she realised he was not someone trying to pick her up, she denied that she had been involved with Vetrick. He happened to be kind and she liked him because he was the only one on the station who had a supply of ginger tea. At the time of the murder she says she was in Quark's bar trying to get a job. Odo was a bit shocked by that, but she said it was better then working in the mines. She warned him that if he continues working for Dukat he will be forced to choose sides.

Odo has not forgotten Mrs Vetrick. He goes to Bajor to see her and has looked into her financial affairs first. He knows that she has been hard pressed for money. She denies any knowledge of what has taken place and claims the name Che'so means nothing to her. He does tell her that Quark may yet recover. When he returns to DS9, Kira tells him that a man with a similar name drowned last night on Bajor. It is a suspected suicide but Odo learns he has had financial dealings with Palira Vetrick and places a security guard on Quark.

The shape-shifter recalls his first meeting with the Ferengi when he went to check up on Kira's alibi. Once Quark realised that Odo was the famous alien, he tried to talk him into working as an attraction in the bar. He also told him Kira had been there looking for a job, and implied she had offered herself to him as an inducement. This Odo refused to believe, and bullied Quark into admitting that Kira paid him to lie and provide her with an alibi. Gul Dukat (whom we heard this part of the interrogation and immediately wanted to know if Odo had a suspect. Odo refused to disclose any results from his investigation yet.

Odo's current investigation discloses that there are seven Bajorans who have each deposited large sums to Mrs Vetrick's account in the last two days. To be so well off now, these Bajorans must have sold out to the Cardassians during the occupation. He and Kira conclude that these were the names on the list and that they are being blackmailed. Odo speculates for his log entry that no one had to teach him the justice trick: his devotion to that idea seems instinctual. Perhaps a racial memory common to his kinds.

He would not give Kira up to Dukat simply because she lied, but he did confront her. Admitting that she was not at Quark's, she finally admitted that she was with the resistance and at the time of the murder she was busy sabotaging an ore processor on level 21. If he tells the Cardassians she will be executed anyway.

Michael Piller and Rick Berman have already said that they regard this episode as the best DS9 they have done to date. The story is helped immeasurably by Marvin Rush's film noir lighting for the flashback sequences to the Cardassian ruled station. It hardly seems the same place. The bright and bustling station becomes dark and oppressive bathed in cold blue light and dark corners full of shuffling, rag-tag Bajorans. The younger Kira has long hair but the same flippant manner. The younger Odo is more mysterious than the stern constable of DS9, partly just due to his costuming as an itinerant traveller.

Marc Alaimo gives another effective performance as Gul Dukat. Katherine Moffat is Palira. Given the film noir motif, it goes without saying that all the women lie in this episode. (9)

9. **Second Sight** 27th November 1993

Teleplay by Mark Gehred-O'Connell and Ira Steven Behr & Robert Hewitt Wolfe; Story by Mark Gehred-O'Connell. Director Alexander Singer. Music Dennis McCarthy. Visual Effects Supervisor Glenn Neufeld

It is the fourth anniversary of the Wolfe 359 massacre, and so of the death of Jennifer Sisko, and both Siskos are having trouble sleeping. Commander Sisko sends his son back to bed but he himself restlessly goes out to walk around the nearly deserted station. He unexpectedly comes upon Fena, a strikingly beautiful woman dressed in red who he has never seen before, but he finds himself relaxing in her presence. She says she finds the station exciting and wishes she could stay longer. When he turns to look out the viewport for but a moment she manages to disappear as suddenly as she first caught his notice.

In Ops the next morning Kira immediately senses a change in Sisko's mood but he denies that anything has happened. He goes to meet a distinguished visitor to DS9 renowned terraformer Gideon Seyetik. Dax warns him that humility and common sense are not part of the profession. Sisko compliments Seyetik on one of his famous creations a planet called Blue Horizon which features spectacular falls. The boisterous terraformer is happy to sing his own praises but tells Sisko that nothing will compare to his new project. He is going to attempt to be the first to reignite a dead sun, Epsilon 119, and return life to an entire solar system.

Sisko is again alone when Fena finds him. They go on the tour of the facility he proposed the night before, but she will not tell him anything more about herself before she disappears into a turbolift. Jake notices his father is distracted and says he has all the signs of being in love that Nog has told him about. Overcome by curiosity about this mystery woman with pointed ears, Sisko asks Odo to find her.

Sisko's mood has become an open secret now, and Dax expects him to tell her everything -- just as he used to tell Curzon Dax. She discovers that Sisko is not as ready to confide in a woman. The whole command staff comes to dinner aboard Seyetik's ship, the Prometheus. The terraformer is in prime form, displaying his painting and his nine volume autobiography while needling Bashir. He also claims to be a gourmet and boasts about the culinary skills of his current wife, Nedall. He has been married a number of times but he brags about Nedall's devotion. Yet when this paragon finally emerges from the kitchen, Dax and Sisko are equally shocked. Although her hairstyle and clothing are much less flamboyant, Nedall looks like Fena.

She shows no sign of recognizing Sisko says she is certain they have not met. Odo reports to him that he has had no success in locating this Fena, and reveals that sensor logs show that the only person who has left the Prometheus is Seyetik.

Fena comes to Sisko yet again, reminding him that they planned a picnic. He asks her about Nedall but she denies knowing anyone with that name and she also insists she has no twin sister. She and Sisko kiss, but then she cries out and literally fades out of sight before his eyes.

Sarah Elise Richardson is the new girl in town but the big name in the guest cast is Richard Kiley as the overbearing Seyetik. Although there has been a concerted effort early in this season to lighten up the glum and wooden Sisko, this fleeting romance does not give him much to work with. His best moments continue to be scenes with his son. Veteran scene-stealer Kiley happily chews the scenery when called upon, but does not have a great deal to work with. (6)

10. **Sanctuary** 4th December 1993

Teleplay by Frederick Rappaport; Story by Gabe Essoe & Kelley Miles; Director Les Landau; Music Dennis McCarthy. Visual Effects Supervisor Glenn Neufeld

Kira is in a very bad mood - Sisko is unhappy over late reports, she has spent hours in fruitless quarrels with the Bajoran Provisional Government over the need to irrigate badly needed farmland as Bajor suffers food shortages, and Quark is demanding to see her. At her urging he hired Varani, a famous Bajoran musician, to play in his bar, but the listeners are mesmerized and barely drink or gamble. Quark demands that she get Varani to play something with more bounce. On the other hand, the musician wants her to speak to the ministers about rebuilding the most famous concert hall on Bajor.

An unknown ship emerges from the wormhole, and proves to carry a woman accompanied by two men and a boy who has burnt his hand - all of a race unknown to the Federation. The universal translator proves unable to decipher their language, so, assuming that this problem will be resolved if they keep their visitors talking long enough to give the computers sufficient data, Sisko tries to reassure them as best he can. But the boy is hostile and the woman is more interested in talking to Kira. Sisko asks the Major to lead their guests to sickbay since they seem most comfortable with her.

The arrivals are clearly fascinated by the shops and people on the Promenade, but Odo has his hands full making the men put back items they pick up. There is another scene in sickbay when the woman wants Kira rather than Bashir to treat the boy's burns. Eventually the translator begins to pick up phrases and before long they learn that their visitors are from a people called the Scria and need help. They also discover that the Scria are a female dominant society and that Haneek is the person in charge her two men and son.

She explains that her people are on the other side of The Eye of the Universe (the Wormhole) and that they must be brought here. The three million Scria have been held in servitude as farmers for 800 years by the Terrogerands, but their masters have been invaded and conquered by some member of the Dominion, giving the Scria an opportunity to flee in those ships they could find. They sought out the Eye of the Universe as their legends tell them this is the way to their original home on a planet called Kintana.

The staff meet with Haneek to discuss what to do and she confesses her shock to Kira that men are involved in such decisions. The Scrian men are far too emotional for such things and prone to fighting among themselves. But she is determined that the rest of her people must know she has found the way to Kintana, "a planet of sorrow where we will sow seeds of joy." Sisko agrees to send the Runabouts to find and lead the rest of the Scria to DS9, although Odo points out that the station can only hold 7,000 people. Haneek readily agrees with Kira that most of their people will have to remain on board their ships while Sisko searches for a suitable world for them to occupy.

As the first few hundred Scrians arrive, they are not universally popular. Although Varani and Kira are touched by their story and the similarity to the history of the Bajorans, Quark complains that they buy nothing and have disgusting personal habits that drive away customers. Nog plays tasteless practical jokes on Haneek's son and is taken to security, where Quark comes to get him with formal apologies but no real contrition. Later Tormak and his friends attack Nog, who is rescued by his uncle. Quark makes it clear that the Scria are no longer welcome as far as he is concerned.

Kira believes that Sisko has found a perfect planet for the Scrian farmers to reclaim and rushes to tell Haneek, who has been appointed leader by a meeting of the other women. Draylon II is an uninhabited M class planet with good soil and a long growing season. She wants Haneek to arrange a meeting so they can tell the others about this opportunity. Haneek is not interested in Draylon II, however. After looking at star charts she is convinced that the Kintana of their sacred writings is Bajor and wants the Provisional Government to let them settle there.

Kira is sure she knows what the answer will be, but forwards the Scrias' request that they be allowed to reclaim the Trilar peninsula which used to be farmland until ravaged by the Cardassians.

The script takes an amazingly long time to arrive at the inevitable discovery that Bajor is the planet the Scria want to claim. It is also odd that there seems to be no reference at all to the Scria in Bajoran history nor to the Bajorans in Scrian history if they have only been captives beyond the wormhole for 800 years. In any case, this leads to another situation in which there is no ready solution, although for once Sisko does not assume the role of legal arbiter.

The ploy of having the Scria be a society run by females is also quite predictable and leads to the inevitable comments by Haneek to Kira about the usefulness of sharing her bed with two men. Her men behave like two of the three stooges and her son is a moody hot head, so she should be able to get her own sitcom deal quite easily. However, her son is played by Walter Koenig's son Andrew and so becomes an instant answer to a future trivia question. Deborah May plays Haneek under a peculiar hairdo that seems to be lifted from WWII fashions on the home front. But the most notable aspect of the Scrian makeup is their skin. Instead of giving them lumpy foreheads Michael Westmore made use of DS9's mandate this season to devise more complicated alien makeups by giving them permanently flakey skin. The effect is of a whole race just getting over chicken pox or a sun burn. One of the things Quark complains about is that they leave flakes of skin behind wherever they go. This may be a deliberate effort to make them unendearing yet ungroanable.

Another oddity is the casting of familiar character actor William Schallert - who gets top billing - in the whole incidental role of Varani. Is this rubbing it in to the TNG gang that they have money to burn?(5)

Kathleen Toth

TEXTUAL POACHERS: Television Fans and Participatory Culture by Henry Jenkins. (Published by Routledge, £9.99)

It's amazing what sociologists will turn their attention to. Not content to investigate burning issues like poverty, sexism, racism and power; those bearded, tweed jacketed liberals in their ivory towers have now flexed their analytical skills in our direction. Yes, it's here: The Sociology of Telefantasy Fans!

Academics aren't always held in terribly high esteem by telefantasy fans. When John Tulloch published *The Unfolding Text* in 1984, many fans condemned the book arguing that it missed the point. Particularly because beneath the sociological neutrality Tulloch and Avaraldo entertained a fondness for Williams and Adams' production style at a time when fans thought of them as the Doctor's betrayers. I would be surprised if many fans approached a study of fandom itself without a few worries. Having read a few academic articles about 'fan audiences' before, I certainly started reading Jenkins' book with some trepidation, wary of finding another infuriating description of fans as passive, indiscriminate consumers, obsessed with anything with pointy ears and a spaceship. Fortunately, Henry Jenkins has produced a different kind of book altogether.

Starting his investigation with William Shatner's infamous comment, "Get a life", Jenkins examines the popular 'trainspotter' image of fans and then dissects and rejects it. Jenkins' analysis of fans is based on the way in which we watch the programmes we love.

The basic difference between the ordinary viewer and the fan viewer is (of course) commitment and repetition. We're willing to watch and rewatch these programmes, both because we like them but also out of a loyalty to the programme. And as Tim Munro's recent history of JNT's producership illustrates, we're not always happy with what we get. Jenkins illustrates how we 'salvage' stories, how we struggle with them to find interesting angles and possibilities in unpleasing tales. This rewriting and reconstructing of what the stories mean is what ultimately defines the fan. Dave Owen's recent review the *Vengeance on Varos* is a nice illustration of this (DWB 113). Dave Owen, whilst being heavily critical of that story, eventually rates Vengeance a six. This is not because of some particularly good element in an otherwise bad production, but because he developed and liked a new meaning for the story. In this case, that the events that take place on Varos are in fact a mirror of the way in which the BBC sell us DOCTOR WHO as a product. Dave Owen's commitment to 'WHO generally means that he 'salvages' some good out of a story that he sees as being flawed.

It's from these ideas that Jenkins develops the concept of the fan as a 'Textual Poacher'. "Fans are not merely passive consumers but rather have a mastery over the text, they become active participants in the construction and circulation of meaning." We travel across lands we don't own, poaching from texts that we haven't written. And just like poachers of game, we're marginalised from the point of cultural production. After all, poachers can't afford to breed pheasants, just as we can't afford to make the programmes. He sees DOCTOR WHO fans as a "powerless elite", having a privileged relationship to the programme through our knowledge of it and our ability to make informed criticisms of the production office's decisions, and yet being powerless because we have no mechanism to lever influence over the actual production of the programme. Fandom is a place where these meanings and criticisms are shared, produced and becomes the basis for collective action.

Textual Poachers is a study of American telefantasy fans by an American telefantasy fan. It's interesting not only for what it says about fandom, but also for its description of what American fandom, in particular, is like. I was astounded by the sheer size and sophistication of US fandom. Throughout the book, Jenkins lists and discusses hundreds of fanzines, societies and conventions. The methods fans use to communicate to each other in the States are also impressive; computer networks are used to discuss TWIN PEAKS, letter chains to pass on PROFESSIONALS fiction; it all makes the letters page of DWB seem terribly primitive! American fandom also seems to have another obvious benefit: women. The American fans of programmes like BLAKE'S SEVEN, STAR TREK, QUANTUM LEAP and ALIEN NATION interviewed were predominantly female, and these were editors, film makers and songsmiths — fandom's leaders (90% of American telefantasy fan fiction writers are estimated to be women). This may well be a false impression on my part, but British DOCTOR WHO fandom seems to be a male preserve ,although I don't know if that's true for other British fandoms). American telefantasy appears to be a less conflictual subculture, unless Jenkins was looking through rose tinted spectacles. It's possible that gender has an influence in this, as there appeared to be few of the battles between different parts of fandom which go on with such regularity here.

Perhaps the greatest impression I was left with after reading the book was the sheer variety of fan creativity in the States. Obviously this can be accounted for in terms of there being a bigger audience for fan writing and other merchandise, in fact several fanzines exist which simply contain lists of other fanzines! The different styles of fan fiction are quite astonishing (and some are really rather...odd). Jenkins provides a typology of fan fiction which is fascinating. Obviously much of American fan fiction is similar to British writing, straight forward adventure stories and short fiction which attempts to fill "gaps" in the programme's unfolding narratives (eg. the background to the Colin Baker/Sylvester McCoy regeneration which has appeared in numerous British fanzines). However, I can't imagine some of it ever being published over here. Take the 'Mary Sue' stories for example. These are stories where the (thinly disguised versions of) authors themselves board the TARDIS, Enterprise/Liberator and adventure alongside their heroes. Call me old fashioned, but I doubt that will ever catch on here (mind you, I said that about Kareoke). Whilst this form of fan writing is not held in particularly high regard in the States, several fanzines are devoted to producing only stories of this type.

Perhaps the most surprising form of American fan fiction is 'slash' fiction. This isn't a horror genre, quite the opposite infact. In a chapter entitled, 'Welcome to Bi-sexuality, Captain Kirk', Henry Jenkins discusses the role of homoerotic writing in American fan fiction. Telefantasy pornography is nothing new, in fact I've heard of BLAKE'S 7 heterosexual erotica before, but 'slash' fiction is something different (the 'slash' indicates the relationship between two characters eg. Kirk/Spock). Many of these stories, and, again, there are several fanzines devoted to them, focus on the possible sexual relationship between Kirk and Spock, although other principal characters from telefantasy series appear (Harry Truman and Dale Cooper, Avon and Vila, Solo and Kuryakin etc etc) More surprisingly this form of fan fiction is written exclusively by heterosexual women.

'Slash' represents 'textual poaching' at its extreme. Here, the fans borrow characters that they do not own and in the process transform those characters into people who have meaning for them (Jenkins sees 'slash' as a way in which women can explore the limitations of traditional gender relations — making male heroes more vulnerable and sensitive).

Whilst I found the theoretical discussions in the book a little limited, I also found reading the book an affirming experience. After all, most active telefantasy fans will not find the idea of textual poaching particularly illuminating. Every time we write a short story or a video review we are poaching narratives, characters and themes which are not our own, but we turn them into something else - something that we do own. That is the whole point about telefantasy fandom (and this book), as Jenkins concludes,

"Fan critics work to resolve gaps, to explore.. details and undeveloped potentials. This...draws them far beyond the information explicitly present and toward the construction of a metatext that is larger, richer, more complex and interesting than the original series." Clearly, this book has more to say to non-fans than to us, and it's a great shame that it will only be read by a couple of hundred people doing media studies courses. Still, if it convinces only a handful of people that we're not vacant, anorak wearing idiots then that can't be a bad thing.(7)

Matthew Jones

CAPTAIN'S LOGS Boxtree, £12.99

YET another STAR TREK episode guide, yet another book by Altman and Gross, I hear you cry!

Well yes, this latest offering again seeks to boldly go where many have gone before and presents us with the latest "definitive" guide to the STAR TREK (live action) saga. Many of you will be familiar with the work of Altman and Gross through their New Voyages books and lengthy articles in *Cinefantastique*, and it is true to say that the post 1987 material treads pretty familiar (albeit well written) ground. But where the book comes into its own is in its treatment of STAR TREK in the 1970s and the abortive STAR TREK II series.

There are a profusion of books available that chart the voyages of THE NEXT GENERATION, but aside from Allan Asherman's hagiography that is the *STAR TREK Compendium*, surprisingly little is available concerning the original series. *Captains Logs* seeks to rectify this and the authors provide a typically opinionated review of the 79 original segments. Season three as one would expect comes out worst of all, with the authors seemingly reluctant to recognise any merit in any of the episodes. Perhaps most interesting however, are the details of behind the scenes wranglings and the eccentric behaviour and obsessions of Gene Roddenberry. Not for the first time one is left musing as to whether the real "Great Bird of the Galaxy" is Gene Coon rather than Roddenberry.

I found the book to be at its best when covering the post-cancellation era and provides perhaps the best analysis yet of the ill fated STAR TREK II, with special attention paid to the never-ending battles over scripting and production.

Continually one is left with the impression that whilst Roddenberry had come up with the original idea, he had little left to offer aside from constant interference and re-writing of scripts which did not abide by his "vision" of the future. As we all know, his "vision" produced the crushing bore that is *Star Trek The Motion Picture*. Small wonder, as the authors point out, that Roddenberry was only Paramount's third choice when it came to creating THE NEXT GENERATION, and that the first season is practically unwatchable at times.

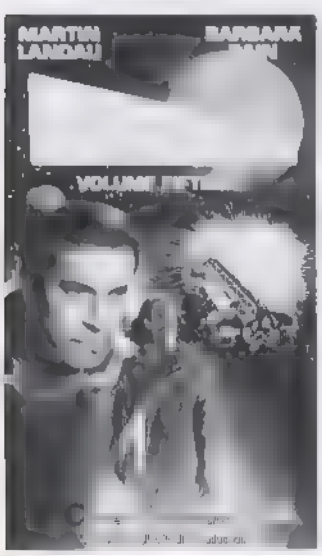
The book's treatment of the films is similarly an excellent read, with the continual griping of Walter Koenig revealing a severe case of bad grapes. How many people really pay to see a TREK film to watch Chekov? The overall impression is of big screen egos believing that the fans owe them a living and of fierce resentment by some towards the success of Picard and company. Do such revelations make the book worth buying? Well for those who've got the authors NEXT GENERATION opinions already in the aforementioned books/magazines, then the answer has to be: only if you want a well written account of the show pre 1987. If you haven't read anything by Altman and Gross before then I would strongly recommend this book. It's nicely presented, often witty, and thankfully avoids the sycophancy of Mr Asherman, indeed one would hope that this is the book which finally condemns the *Compendium* to the remainder shelves (9)

Duncan Harvey

SPACE:1999
VOLUME FIFTEEN
ITC8213 £10 99

In *New Adam, New Eve*, Moonbase Alpha's daily routine of light hearted jests and knowing looks between Doctor Russel and Commander Koenig is rudely interrupted by the sudden appearance of a Jason King look-alike claiming to be God (with a capital G). Naturally enough the crew of the Moonbase are sceptical about their new visitor, especially Koenig, the Moon's resident supreme being, and ask for his credentials. Before things get too metaphysical God whisks the series' four stars, Koenig, Helena, Tony and Maya, off to a nearby planet which he intends to turn into a new Eden with two Adams and two Eves. Needless to say the path of true lust does not run smooth. God intends to pair up Tony with Helena and Koenig with Maya. This spurs our heroes into action and pretty soon there is open conflict between the Alphans and the being who claims to be their creator. There is more to this story than one would first imagine given that the claims of the being that calls itself God are discounted at a fairly early stage by Koenig and the gang, and the giant lizard that appears towards the end of the episode is also good for a laugh. (6)

There is nothing like a good performance and in *Seed of Destruction* Martin Landau's work is nothing like a good performance. After being trapped on an ice world an evil doppelganger of Commander Koenig returns back to Alpha and attempts to imitate the Commander's personality whist putting into action an obviously suicidal plan that will lead to the destruction of the Moonbase. What an opportunity for Landau to shine, to highlight different aspects of Koenig's personality as the pair try to copy each other. An opportunity that is squandered from start to finish. That old ham William Shatner does a much better job in the STAR TREK episode *Mirror, Mirror* — the evil Koenig simply shouts at everybody and frowns a lot. It is no surprise that Tony and Maya suspect something of the truth within minutes of the Commander's return. What is a little more surprising is Alan Carter's blindness to the fact that Koenig is acting several sandwiches short of a picnic. The only redeeming feature of this story is that it is not a two-parter. (4)



SPACE:1999
VOLUME SIXTEEN
ITC8214 £10 99

The first thing one remembers about *The A-B Chrysalis* is that it features two women wearing smug expressions and very little else. Other than this the story has very little going for it. Koenig, as always, plays the hero when the Moon is about to pass by a planet which is emitting powerful explosive waves. As the Moon approaches the planet the explosions become stronger and threaten to destroy Alpha. Koenig takes Maya and Alan to investigate the source of the explosions, and the Commander soon discovers they are created by giant generators and tacky special effects - a defence mechanism designed to keep intruders away. Koenig attempts to reason with the planet's inhabitants, but as they are in a chrysalis state, even shouting at them has no effect. Thus Koenig has to use all his powers of tact and diplomacy to save his people — things have never looked so black for the Alphans. This is yet another story in which Koenig single handedly battles against impossible odds but everything turns out alright in the end anyway. (5)

Last this month but by no means least comes *Catacombs of the Moon*, a story worth watching if just for the brevity of Martin Landau's appearance on the screen. Engineer Patrick Osgood is desperately searching for terranium below the Moon's surface. Terranium is a scarce mineral essential for the operation of Alpha's life support systems, and more importantly, for the manufacture of artificial hearts. Osgood's desperation is explained when we are told that his wife, played by Pamela Stevenson, is dying for want of a replacement heart. The narrative drive is put into second gear when we learn that, on top of all his troubles, Osgood is suffering from visions of the Moon engulfed in flames. The only thing that stops him being put on the next trolley bound for one of Alpha's rubber walled rooms is the fact that a celestial firestorm is spotted on a collision course with, guess what? This story is the best of a pretty poor bunch; the acting is acceptable, the plot has a few twists and turns to keep it interesting and the guest stars and secondary characters are given a decent percentage of the lines for a change. (7)

Anthony McKay

Conundrum

'But Doctor', the boy said, 'fictional characters are immortal. The Goblins never killed Bilbo Baggins, did they? Kirk always remained standing as his supporting cast dropped around him. Enid Blyton's kids never found a poisonous cloud at the top of the Magic Far-Away Tree.'

WELL, the latest run of NEW ADVENTURES are certainly a mixed bag, aren't they? After the patchy *Blood Heat*, the pretentious and confusing *Dimension Riders* and the perfectly beautiful *Left Handed Hummingbird* comes Steve Lyons' first effort and, ironically, one of the oldest ideas in fandom.

When the world was very young, and fan fiction was still a new toy to play with, most of us (yes, even Cornell) spent a lot of our time scribbling 'What if?' scenarios. And a fair proportion of these took the movie ethic of make-and-remake and applied it to DOCTOR WHO. Looking through the canon it seemed to occur to most writers that, of all the stories to do a sequel, three stood out for the treatment. *The Pirate Planet* was an obvious fan-favourite although most of these were actually prequels. The Peladon saga was similarly ripe for exploitation (and Gary Russell's already bagged the rights to that goldmine). The third (and in many ways, most obvious) story was *The Mind Robber*. Everybody ripped off *The Mind Robber*. Well, I did (pretty badly as it happens). Manchester's Steve Lyons, co-author of the RED DWARF Programme Guide, is the latest to do so. He has, quite frankly, done what most DOCTOR WHO fans would give their right arm to do — write a sequel to a popular TV adventure. Of course, the fact that he's done so well is a bonus.

The Mind Robber II then? Well no, actually. True, the story takes place in the Land of Fiction, features new twists on 'The Master', has the White Robots, and maintains a high continuity with the original. But to call *Conundrum* a mere remake of the Peter Ling Troughton story is to damn it with faint praise. *Conundrum* is DOCTOR WHO's first self-reflecting entity — what the Cartmel era sometimes threatened, and *Nightshade* hinted at, *Conundrum is*.

Conundrum is not merely a novel about characters from a television show, it is a novel about characters who know they're from a television show, and act accordingly. It is MOONLIGHTING, PARKER LEWIS CAN'T LOSE, THE SIMPSONS AND UP POMPEII! all rolled into one. This isn't exactly a new idea (mainstream comics have been using the technique for years), but it is unique in something so proudly po-faced about its own reality as DOCTOR WHO. *Conundrum* is also funny. Laugh-out loud funny. Tell the best gags to complete strangers funny. Lyons' ability with dialogue is tremendous, using mood shifts and sudden revelations about character motivation with a deliberate (often provocative) tongue-in-his-cheek. "In this beautiful Land of Fiction, I can do just whatever I damn well like!" says 'The Writer' at one point — a two-fingers gesture to all us NEW ADVENTURES *wannabes*.

So what do we get in this post modern apocalypse of knowing, informed ideas? Well, we've got a murder mystery in a *Revelation*-style Olde English village. We've got a fine series of exploding clichés. And we've got the usual squabbling TARDIS crew; can I be the only reader who is getting fantastically irritated with Ace — nobody is that messed up, surely? Benny, on the other hand, is great with Lyons continuing Kate Orman's charming idea of turning Benny into an old-style Doctor companion (ie: somebody to whom the question "What is it Doctor?" is second nature!) There's also a fist fight between Ace and Benny. Very P.C. Steve..

Virgin Books - £4.99
January 20th

The best thing about *Conundrum*, however, are the other characters that inhabit Lyons' *zeitgeist* Land of Fiction. 'The Adventure Kids' (now have a guess as to whom *they're* supposed to be — one of them is even called Gary. Oh, what a giveaway!). They are a weird TOMORROW PEOPLE universe version of THE FAMOUS FIVE WHO GET ALL the best action, and most of the best lines. There's an entire series here if anyone's interested. We've also got Jack Corrigan, a hard-boiled private dick (that's a sex machine with all the chicks — Jack! Rite on!), a tremendous parody of Raymond Chandler noire L.A. novel writing that's a million times closer to the genre than Douglas Adams' attempts. Doctor Nemesis, a quite brilliant Grant Morrison revisionist supervillain with a great line in pithy violence ("You want to die first?") also turns up. Indeed, Steve Lyons could be one of the great pith artists of our generation.. Ahem.

Then we're treated to the most unlikely piece of lore to be revived yet. John and Gillian! No, really! If Graham

NEVER MIND THE BOLLOCK MONSTERS

PARENT ADVISORY SUGGESTED This review contains explicit language

HERE'S

NO FUTURE

W.lliams had done something like this we'd have spat at him, but in this *Animal Man* existentialist insanity anything goes. Not only that, but we have a paragraph that mentions 'Discoworld' (There is something seriously wrong when Virgin's proof reader doesn't recognise Britain's best-selling fantasy novel series when it's struck by a typo), Spike and Linda and Professor X in the space of three lines. And *Nightshade* is big business here "you know there was that big *Night shade* nostalgia thing, the videos and the books and the repeats and all that.") Take that as one in the eye if you want your Doctor Who to exist in a vacuum into which no other cultural influences can intrude. Knowing Lyons' penchant for 70s tack, *Conundrum* is almost begging for a *Goodies* cameo... No, maybe we'll save that for another day, and another New Adventure.

I admire this book, it has more gumption and a hell of a lot more imagination than ninety per cent of the New Adventures output Steve Lyons takes risks with the structure of his micro-universe, wanting the reader to believe that they are in a strange, ethereal netherworld of faded 50s nostalgia before thrusting them head-first into a much more frightening Land of Fiction than they could possibly have been prepared for. The cartoon character on the cover gives the game away, of course, as will things like this review But the fact that the setting is somewhere as obvious as the Land of Fiction shouldn't detract from the sheer verve of Lyons' plot and supporting characters. There's none of Blythe's boring philosophy, none of Aaronovitch's suffocating technobabble here. Just a good old fashioned story teller having fun with the boundaries of reality Smashing! Oh, and the main stories' final line (before a brief, and somewhat pointless final page) is a perfectly weighted through ball, spanked into the corner of the net with real Premier League talent.

Steve Lyons, along with Gareth Roberts, and Paul Cornell, represent the new left of Doctor Who writers Novelists who believe in the Terrance Dicks school of making the Doctor a hero and his enemies green nasties with no redeeming features. Writers who want to revel in the chaos magick of Doctor Who. To get away from the science for science's sake school of much of the New Adventures output Steve Gallagher once described modern science fiction as being "written for physics students by physics students" and, for much of the last couple of years reading the New Adventures that's how I've felt. Doctor Who doesn't need this, and, thankfully *Conundrum* avoids it like the plague. It is retro, it is 70s and it is absolutely wonderful If I have a complaint, Steve, it would be that 'The Purple Nasty' is a drink that became a fandom injoke mid-80s, and that "the fictional replicas may have been entertaining, but I always preferred the real McCoy" is going to get you a hate club from fandom's new right.

I had thought that Paul Cornell, or at a pinch Gary Russell would write the best (and truest) fan novel of 1994 Within five days of the beginning of the year I'm having second thoughts

Buy this, because you might never find another one quite like it. (9)

Keith Topping

THIS ONE's hysterical. This is everything that Doctor Who should be; tongue so far in it's cheek that you'd recommend surgery. It's wonderful in the way that *The Highest Science* was wonderful — none of this absurd pretence that the show is meant to be serious drama. It's serious, and it has serious issues, but it takes time out to poke fun at itself as well

So what's it all about? Heck, I don't know. Who cares when it's as well done as this? The usual amount of angst is in there, but it's less tiresome this time. Lots of soldiers trogging about, lots of alternate reality stuff (sooner or later, let us pray, New Adventures writers are going to run out of ways to work in alternate realities), lots of punk, lots of mentions of fan frequented London pubs, lots of character exploration and some of the best writing the series has seen. It's a shame that the grievous facetiousness of the opening is not sustained. A hundred or so pages in the book drifts off into a rather imprecise and rambling plot and story comprising lots of set pieces that don't always have much to do with moving the story along. That said, they are very well done, and it's a testament to the quality of the writing that a story which begins so brightly can become so dark without the reader actually noticing the seams. It is also to be respected that the background never overtakes the story The story could not have been set just at any time, but the essential nature of the setting is not obtrusive and this is most probably because it is so well done. Paul's '76 is the most persuasive contemporary earth setting Doctor Who has seen It does not jar in any way, even accounting for the deliberate anachronisms. One can really believe it, even when Big Ben blows up (an unhistorical occurrence the book does not attempt to resolve). The pace is a tad obtrusive. There is very little time to get your bearings while the story hammers along. It is true that there are large reflective chunks — heart to hearts between Benny and

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Danny, Danny and Ace, Ace and Benny but these are also among the best bits.

Two returning villains this time, from quite different periods of the show's history. One is quite understandable, but I can't help feeling that Paul is just being perverse in resurrecting the memorably unmemorable well, they're so unmemorable I can't even remember who they are to spoil the surprise(!) As a villain, Paul's version of the former is very low key and has departed significantly from his TV persona. He's even changed his identity, though I can't see The Record Company Executive catching on in fandom as his new name. The others, it has to be said, are essentially figures of fun. Benny doesn't take them seriously and tells them that neither does anybody else, so their megalomaniac ranting is to be taken with a pinch of salt. It is in respect of this that their presence is a little token and, to some extent this undermines them as a threat — they never are a threat — and this is an element in the book's overcrowding Nevertheless it could be argued that, since both the plotting and the story-telling are as anarchic as the period of the setting, this may be a deliberate contrivance (that may be tautological sorry). The book is about anarchy, and it is anarchic. Two questions then arise :) Is this true? and ii) If it is true is it clever? (and possibly iii) Even supposing it is both of these is it worth doing?)

Question iii is spurious, because we might as well ask whether anything is worth doing. It is possible, so do it Well, maybe not but in this case it is possible generously to interpret what may be muddle as method, intended or not, and this adds to an appreciation of the book. This is a good book and is unlikely, therefore, to be a victim of any kind of sloppiness. As to question ii, it depends what you mean by 'clever'. *No Future* is intelligently written. It is not merely a linear narrative that has flowed unbroken from the pen, it has been constructed and in this regard its conceit — if conceit it be — is deserving of respect. Like a number of New Adventures *No Future* is rather like an Astérix book: you can read it, or you can actually read it.

So, a lot of good ideas, a lot of good jokes (Paul is honourable enough to admit that the 'chap with wings' joke is not his, but he deserves credit for being the first person brave enough to crack it in public), and the best writing we've had from Paul to date. Any reservations? Just one or two. The book is plot-heavy: the old villains and the terrorists all vie for relevance, floating on an ocean of tension between Ace and the Doctor. *No Future* would have been a lot tighter without one of these threads. The punk background is fun but may puzzle a few younger readers Earlier this week I fronted a band playing Sex Pistols covers (including *God Save the Queen*, the original title of which was adopted by this book after *Anarchy in the UK* was dropped to an audience of college students. Most of them didn't understand what the hell we were doing and just hated us. Even today's eighteen year olds were only one or two when the Sex Pistols got going. But then you can never please everybody. One thing to which I do quite strongly object, however, is the deferral of important explanations to the very end. Paul attempts to deflect this by pointing it out ("But there's one thing I still don't understand...") but doesn't quite succeed. The stuff about the Brigadier getting into Buddhism is also a bit unconvincing, and presumably we're meant to assume that the *Mawdryn Undead* amnesia thing is the explanation for its subsequent absence The petty-minded may object that the book assumes the UNIT stories to have been contemporary but who cares about people who fuss over that sort of thing? F--k 'em I wanna be anarchy.(9)

Peter Linford

How Green Was My Valley

The Green Death - Love, Peace and Mushrooms

"Old Jones-the-Mill says they're going to blow up the mine..."

The Green Death; "that DOCTOR WHO story with the maggots..." There is very little else to say really. It came, it patronised the Welsh, it got rid of Jo Grant and it left, all in the space of six Saturday evenings in the summer of 1973. To describe the serial using traditional fan terms (like 'classic' for a start) is rendered meaningless by the sheer weight of its collective aesthetic baggage. *The Green Death*, like *The Dæmons*, carries the entire Letts/Dicks/Pertwee era (and philosophy) with it. If you're talking about DOCTOR WHO in iconic terms, then *The Green Death* is the early 70s; to try to review it in the 90s, with all of the intellectual and political problems that such a shift requires is damn near impossible. But *The Green Death* is back on the BBC, and shortly to be released on video, and for these reasons, if nothing else, *The Green Death* needs to have its entrails examined for decay.

Plot summary (...after Dylan Thomas): *Deep, deep in the valley, Mrs Jones watching silent over her husband, glowing green. And Dai the ecology came to tea, putting mushrooms gently in the pot. They were all turning green soon after, except Dai the Timelord, up on the slaghead, fighting the crawling condoms. Soon, Dai the computer had gone bonkers, isn't it? And Dai the ecology and Mrs. Dai the ecology went off up the Amazon. There's lovely...*" **(with thanks to Dai the writer).**

DOOMWATCH it may not be, but *The Green Death* was ideologically sound, and this was exploited far better than horrid 70s 'realism' would usually allow in DOCTOR WHO. 1973 was the year in which the Western word suddenly discovered the price of high-technology, when the oil that was needed to drive the turbines of industry started to dry up ("cheap petrol and lots of it, just what the world needs" notes the Brigadier in episode one). Robert Sloman's vision of the multinational corporates poisoning the earth, of profit motives and of fascist indifference to the future of the planet seems impossibly naive to today's sophisticated audience. Yet when Cliff Jones talks about "the petrol stinking plastic rat-trap we all live in", we think of Ben Elton's STARK and nod collectively. *The Green Death* runs (almost exclusively) on such coincidences.

Take, for example, one of the most memorable images of the story, the climax to episode three as Jo Grant sits alone in the Nuthatch, with her back to the maggot closing in on her. It's disturbing (it sent this nine year old screaming behind a chair), it's chillingly phallic (mind you, I didn't fully appreciate that aspect until much, much later) and it also re-inforces the central concepts of DOCTOR WHO's space-monster fixations. A woman in peril, ecologically engineered menace (mankind's greed for profit and technological advancement juxtaposed with a threat to innocence) and the horror of unseen danger. Classic episode-ending devices when used separately, but when combined, having the serendipity of being almost the definitive DOCTOR WHO moment.

Jo Grant is one of the main problems with *The Green Death* from the point of view of the anti-Pertwee brigade. Instead of acting in her usual manner (as a dumb-blonde hostage and convenient plot-explanation factor), she is blessed with a Liz Shaw-style 'purpose' and (somewhat confusingly given her *modus operandi*) an intelligence and determination to match. The fledgling might well have flown the coop, but the viewer is entitled to ask if the confused, helpless cretin of fourteen previous stories should be let out on her own, however 'aware' she might have suddenly become. It comes almost as a relief when she is sexistly patronised by Professor Jones on their initial meeting.

And if ever such an insultingly one-dimensional character as Jo was to be given the role of environmental terrorist, couldn't such a radicalism (at least) have been accompanied by a pair of sensible shoes and a rejection of Carnaby Street chic. Saving the planet is all very well, but for God's sake do it in something other than a Biba trouser suit and a sheepskin coat!

But here, we have one of the major problems of the 90s reviewer pushing 90s perspectives onto a piece of 70s tack. In the 70s, as Lawrence Felt has noted "there was long hair, there were leftover hippies everywhere". So, we have aesthetic memories of a bland and superficial era (look at UK Gold's adverts for early 70s TOP OF THE POPS) where, as with the 60s, 'the medium is the message'. Yeah, right on! The TOP OF THE POPS visual effects used to accompany Mike Yates' conditioning, Pertwee's vile red tank-top, the ultra-modern 'space age' design of Global Chemicals; all this is probably true but it also helps to mask the good things.

Despite Pertwee's Doctor's "square establishment" credentials, *The Green Death* does put its radicalism on the line very early on. The opening shot is of a closed down mine head which was both topical for 1973 and horribly prophetic for 1992. The Llanfairfach community glimpsed in *The Green Death* is that of the traditional Welsh valley, spawned in the shadow of the pits, existing only to serve the pits, and dead in the ground as soon as the pits cease to exist. At the very moment that *The Green Death* was being broadcast, the mining industry was standing at a crossroads with a powerful union on the verge of doing something virtually unique to British political history, bringing down a government. But, as Global Chemicals makes clear, other sources of power were being sought, and with the discovery of North Sea Oil, Britain's potential wealth in the world petroleum market seemed about to make coal (and coal-derived electricity) a redundant commodity.

The Green Death to some degree reflects all of this upheaval in a story as much about the dangers of surrendering traditional sources of power to the advance of new industries as it is about mutant maggots and nasty computers. Of course, there are faults with *The Green Death and* the fact that it ends up as just another "mad computer" story is one of the biggest. By 1973 this had been done to death everywhere, but especially in DOCTOR WHO. There's also the fly, the dodgy C.S.O, the Metebelis 3 segment... One could go on. Oh, and Jeremy Thorpe is Prime Minister, apparently. Ridiculous!

We also have the 'standard' Pertwee elements. Terry Walsh playing a fascist guard (so what else is new?) and getting his obligatory two lines per episode. There's the gadgetry, with Pertwee driving anything that moves (a fork-lift truck and a milk-float along with Bessie), and his taking out his naked aggression on three of Global Chemical's guards in typical cardboard Marvel style. We have the usual scientific rubbish, and the laboured comedy with the Doctor going 'undercover' and hamming it up disgracefully as an aged milkman and a cleaning lady. At times the format seems to be on the verge of wearing a bit thin, but The *Green Death* never descends to the farce of some other Pertwee stories and manages to keep a serious edge without ever becoming po-faced or preachy. Given the subject matter that's an astounding achievement. If we go along with the traditional fandom assessment of seasons eight to ten as the zenith of Letts and Dicks' vision, then *The Green Death*, along with over-rated tack like *The Dæmons*, is the standard on which all of the other stories must be judged. And in that respect, *The Green Death* is a fine standard-bearer.

Characters: The Doctor himself, is in a philosophical (dare one say reflective) mood throughout, angered by petty bureaucracy and blinkered attitudes to the future of the planet, but also giving a nod of approval to the hippy antics of the Nuthutch crowd for whom he is a symbol of hope. If only the Pertwee Doctor had always been like this (or the angst-ridden figure of *Inferno*), the bold concepts handled by several writers (notably Robert Sloman) might have been dealt with in a less obviously hammish manner. Jo, as previously noted, is the biggest surprise here. She acts with intelligence and real commitment (her genuine emotion on learning of the death of a couple of minor characters is one of the best depictions of the subject in DOCTOR WHO's history, lasting several scenes and overshadowing other events — as in real life). Of course, being Jo she still manages to screw up most things she attempts, and almost costs her future husband his life saving her from the attack of the ribbed-nobblers.

Of UNIT's eight-man army of jack-booted bully boys, we have something of a final gasp of greatness. The Brigadier is one of the best things about *The Green Death*, be it trying to look trendy in his flat cap and opened-top sports car, be-suited and dealing with Global Chemicals' adolescent power-games, or seemingly perfectly at home in the Nuthutch environment of committed hippy ideals, Courtney is on top form. Even when he's given unspeakably stupid lines ("I never thought I'd fire in anger at a dratted caterpillar!")

Mike Yates is, for once, a real character rather than a cypher with a gun. He's given an espionage role for a change and does it so well that one can only wonder at what direction the character would have taken if he'd been given the chance to work as the Doctor's leg-man again. Sadly, it wasn't to be. Even Benton, the classic example of UNIT at its most army Game-esque gets a couple of good lines, and manages

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to continue acting when confronted with a plastic giant fly on a visible fishing line. Quite a feat for the lad (and better than Pertwee manages).

Of the guest cast, the Global employees range from the coldly amoral Stevens to the idealistic Elgin, who displays a conscience and suffers the traditional Doctor Who exit route for characters too weak to stand up to fascism. There are also lots of Welsh character actors — including Talfryn Thomas — idly standing around using the word "boyo" at every given opportunity. If Plyd Cwumry had needed a party political broadcast on the imposition of English values on Welsh culture, here's one for free.

Then, of course, there's Cliff Jones himself. "A man like Professor Jones'll never give up" Jo informs the Doctor early on. Stewart Bevan is actually very good, a strange mixture of hippy idealist and hardened scientist with a bit of radicalism thrown in to make the character more than a mere Doctor substitute for the first episode. He develops a very interesting relationship with the Doctor (a kind of father/son-in-law thing with Pertwee beaten in verbal battles on more than one occasion). Jones knows as well as the Doctor the horror of an age where mankind has become entirely dependant on the wasteful nature of modern technology. Unlike the Timelord, however, Jones thinks that the answer is not through education, but through direct action, by acting as a doomsayer.

The Green Death was certainly influenced by the age in which it was made (politically, environmentally and in terms of its reference points), it has television bedfellows in DOOMWATCH (a more serious version), Emmerdale Farm and, later, QUATERMASS and RAVEN. The themes expressed in it, that mankind needs to protect his environment before he can think about protecting his future, has been articulated better elsewhere, but that's nothing for Sloman, Letts and Dicks to feel ashamed of. In their own way, they created a simplistic morality tale which is as good as anything else they did in the period.

Ultimately, whether *The Green Death* is a metaphor for the coming age of petroleum power didn't matter to the audience at the time, and shouldn't really do so today. I was nine when *The Green Death* was first shown and my main concerns centred on whether my Chopper bike had three or four gears, whether my dad could afford the new aqua-suit for my Action Man, whether Newcastle United could overcome the humiliation of their calamitous cup defeat to Hereford and, of course, whether the Doctor could beat the maggots. The breakdown of society, political evil, and the problems of pollution would come later.

I could be politically correct and call *The Green Death* a misguided blind alley, but that'd be a betrayal of my childhood. I could suggest that one,s opinion of *The Green Death* largely depends on how highly you rate the entire Pertwee era, but it's possible to ignore the cosiness factor with this story. I could even state that *The Green Death* is the point where DOCTOR WHO almost overdosed on its own pretentions and that we all had one hell of a lucky escape. It was, and we did, but who cares? *The Green Death* is a video I'll probably buy, and almost certainly enjoy.

And it's the only place on Earth where you'll get some sound advice on what to do with your Perigosto Stick if you meet a Venusian Shanghorn. For that, alone, *The Green Death* deserves, and gets (8)

Keith Topping

TOP *TEN* THINGS THAT ARE WRONG WITH *THE GREEN DEATH*

("The worst DOCTOR WHO story ever made")

••• *Nicolle Fisher Speaks Out!* •••

1. No Plot

Well perhaps there is a bit of a plot but it changes tack so many times that you start to wonder just what is meant to be going on. The main components seem to be naughty businessmen (to start with) then (moving on) slime causing pulsing green splodges (after which) maggots and maniac computers accompanied by (to finish with) giant flies. Which is the most important bit? Who knows? It is the computer bit of the plot which (this being a Pertwee story) ends with a huge explosion, so maybe that was the most important bit.

2. Lousy Acting

From all concerned apart from the inevitable Talfryn Thomas, stock Welsh actor of the time, without whom many a BBC production would have wanted, and his countryman Mostyn Evans. Actually Katy Manning is not too bad but, as with so many DOCTOR WHO companions (notably Sophie Aldred and Janet Fielding) when called upon to do some slightly more sophisticated, passionate acting, such as falling in love, she proves to be out of her depth.

3. Cheap Politics

This, of course, is the story where we're supposed to listen to the message. But the message is sledgehammered home with all the refined subtlety and precision of a nuclear warhead. Worse it is unsophisticated, naive and obvious. Businessmen - Bad; Rustics - Good. People who want to be preached at go to church, the TUC or watch STAR TREK. They do not watch DOCTOR WHO.

4. Patronising Treatment of the Welsh (Isn't It?)

It is something of a miracle that inimitable Talfryn Thomas agreed to appear in *The Green Death*. From the scene with the milkman onwards the Welsh are stereotyped as quaint, dim-witted, flat-capped people who spend most of their time in mines.

5. The Worst CSO ever seen on Television

The lift descending is laughable. When the budget seems to have run out in part six and the action cuts between filmed scenes and CSOd scenes of the same location all you can really do is laugh. And as for the fly... Enough said here probably.

6. Improbable Resolution

If the plot of *The Green Death* leaves a lot to be desired the resolution (one of the resolutions, for there are two) is just absurd. The idea that all of the reported thousands of maggots on the hillside are going to nibble the deadly fungus thrown from one car is too much to swallow. This being the Letts era of course there has to be a whopping explosion at the end as well and to bring this about we have a nice little confuse-the-computer scene straight out of the STAR TREK episode *I, Mudd* and several other shows. That it should turn up in DOCTOR WHO is very tiresome, and since we never needed the computer-trying- to-take-over-the-world plot anyway it ends up being plain boring. Furthermore the computer looks rather stupid.

7. Jon Pertwee

8. Too Many Episodes

Like many Pertwee six-parters, particularly *The Mind of Evil* and the preceding *Planet of the Daleks*, *The Green Death* plods desperately in parts three, four and five. In the case of *The Green Death* most of this time is spent finding a new bit of story — to whit, the computer.

9. Still on Earth

This Earth-bound bit had exhausted its potential ages ago. Having got into space we should have stayed there, or at least not gone back to the UNIT bit once we were back on Earth. It would have been interesting to see an Earth based Pertwee story not involving the Doctor's position as UNIT adviser; not involving the military. Would he have coped?

10. Katy Manning leaves

This was never going to be a good thing. She may have been a bimbo but she was, at least, the bimbo's bimbo. While Letts was on the producer's throne it was as good as we were going to get so why change? Of course we would have been altogether better off if Caroline John had stuck it out, but it was to take a change of producer actually to entertain the idea of companions being intelligent, resourceful and capable of assisting the Doctor, rather than merely accompanying him.

Special offer bonus thing that is good about *The Green Death*:

The final shot is rather nice.